THE

BEAUTIES OF HENRY:

A SELECTION OF

THE MOST STRIKING PASSAGES

IN THE

EXPOSITION

OF

THAT CELEBRATED COMMENTATOR.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE, CHARACTER, LABOURS, AND DEATH,

OF THE AUTHOR.

VOL. I.

Extracted from the Historical Part of the Old Testament.

BY JOHN GEARD.

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PREFACE.

CERTAIN cauſes operate very gradually in the effects which they produce. This is the fact as to the following work, which offers itſelf to the reader's candour. It originated from a hint thrown out by a friend ſeveral years ſince, reſpecting the deſirableneſs of collecting and publiſhing a number of the conciſe, pithy, inſtructive and animating remarks, which are ſcattered up and down in Mr. Matthew Henry's Expoſition of the Bible.

At the time when this was firſt ſuggeſted, I was ſo far ſtruck, as to concur with my friend in opinion, but had not, at that time, nor for years afterwards, that I recollect, the ſmalleſt idea of engaging in ſuch a buſineſs. After a lapſe of ſome years, however, I was ſo impreſſed with this idea, as to determine, if I found no one elſe had engaged in ſuch a work, to venture on it myſelf: and as I could not find, after a number of enquiries, that any thing of the kind, at leaſt after the manner that I propoſed, had been attempted, I concluded to proſecute it, to which I was encouraged by ſeveral miniſters of different denominations.

It has been a cuſtom of late years to extract particular parts of the works of certain authors, who, in different lines, have attained to peculiar degrees

of celebrity, and publiſh thoſe Extracts, under the appellation of the *Beauties* of ſuch authors. Hence we have heard of The Beauties of the Spectator—The Beauties of Watts—The Beauties of Goldſmith—The Beauties of Johnſon, &c. But, without pretending to detract from the real Beauties of any authors whatever, I cannot but think there are as many paſſages of that deſcription in the works of Mr. Henry, and eſpecially in his Expoſition, as there are in any of thoſe that have been mentioned, if not more than in all of them put together. Nor will this be ſo much wondered at, if not only the peculiar turn of the author, but the voluminouſneſs of his writings be taken into conſideration.

Among the diſtinguiſhed advantages which are enjoyed in this age and nation, the numerous and excellent Expoſitions which we have of the Sacred Scriptures is not the leaſt: and among thoſe Expoſitions, that of Mr. Henry, in one particular view at leaſt, perhaps, excels all the reſt. In my opinion, however, it excels all that I have ſeen, for its ſhort, ſententious, ſpiritual and animating remarks. No other author appears to equal him in the deſirable and happy art of mixing the uſeful with the pleaſant.

The late Mr. *Ryland*, ſpeaking of this work, ſays, "Mr. Matthew Henry's Expoſition is peculiarly excellent for the ſweet notes and ſprightly turns of thought which every where abound: 'tis impoſſible for a perſon of piety and taſte to read him without

wiſhing to be ſhut out from all the world to read him through, without one moment's interruption*."

But however excellent this work is in itſelf, there are but very few, comparatively, that can either find money to purchaſe, or time to read it. Five volumes in folio are not within every one's reach. It has been thought deſirable, therefore, to put ſome, at leaſt, of Mr. Henry's animating inſtructions into the power of thoſe who cannot procure them all. This is what is aimed at in the preſent attempt. It has been my endeavour to hold a burning glaſs, as it were, to the ſun, and to collect ſome of its rays into a focus. A great number of the Extracts which I have made may be conſidered as ſo many proverbs: and yet at the ſame time, they throw ſome particular light upon ſuch paſſages of Scripture, as, in connecnection with the reſt of the author's Expoſition, they were deſigned to illuſtrate. I am much miſtaken if this work may not be conſidered as a partial Expoſition, as well as a Collection of a great number of admirable detached ſentences.

I have found much ſatisfaction and pleaſure in making theſe Extracts, and in reading over the work in order to make them: and I think I have had more conſiſtent ideas of certain parts of Scripture, than ever I had before, ſince I have been employed in this undertaking. This has been the caſe particularly as to the diſtinguiſhing difference be-

* Ryland's Contemplations, Vol. I. p. 371.

tween certain of the legal ſacrifices; and I have endeavoured, in the Extracts which I have made relative to thoſe ſubjects, to convey ſome juſt ideas of them to the underſtanding of the attentive reader.

Poſſibly, if I had attempted to expreſs the ideas contained in theſe Extracts, in my own way, I might, in ſome inſtances, have made uſe of different words: but I have made it an invariable rule to let Mr. Henry expreſs his own ideas in his own words: nor are there any of mine in the whole work, except ſuch as appeared neceſſary for the purpoſes of introduction or connection.

The Volume now offered to the Public is compleat as far as it goes. It contains Extracts from Mr. Henry's expoſition on the Hiſtorical part of the Old Teſtament. Whether any thing farther will be produced depends upon circumſtances not within my controul. If God ſpares my life, and continues to indulge me with that merciful ſhare of health and ſpirits, which I have, through his great goodneſs, enjoyed ſince I engaged in this work, and this firſt part meets with the acceptance and approbation of the friends of evangelical truth and holineſs, it is my intention, by the divine permiſſion, to go through the remainder of the Old Teſtament, and alſo through the New; and I ſhall think that I have not lived altogether in vain, if I ſhould be the happy inſtrument of putting ſuch a treaſure into the hands of the poor of the flock of Chriſt (many of whom, I hope, would be able to procure it) as the Beauties

of Henry, extracted from his Expoſition on the Old and New Teſtament, would contain. But even ſuppoſing this whole object ſhould not be accompliſhed, I cannot but hope that this firſt volume will be found to contain a fund of excellent matter, adapted to the various ſtages and occupations of human life, and the different viciſſitudes of Chriſtian experience, and I humbly pray, that it may be abundantly bleſſed for inſtruction, edification, and conſolation.

As there is naturally a curioſity in us to know ſomething of the characters of thoſe whoſe works we read, I have prefixed to theſe Extracts ſome Account of that eminent character from whoſe Expoſition they have been made.

I now commend the whole to the candid peruſal of the Public, and to the bleſſing of God.

JOHN GEARD.

Hitchin, Herts, June 4. 1796.

BRIEF MEMOIRS

OF THE

REV. MR. MATTHEW HENRY.

MR. MATTHEW HENRY had the happineſs to deſcend from anceſtors, ſeveral of whom appear to have been peculiarly eminent for religion. Of this deſcription was his grand-mother, i. e. his father's mother. This remarkable ſaying is mentioned, as what ſhe uttered a little before ſhe died. "*My* "*head is in heaven, and my heart is in heaven, it is* "*but one ſtep more, and I ſhall be there too.*"

His father was the famous Mr. Philip Henry, whoſe praiſe has long been in the churches. He was one of the miniſters, who were ejected out of their livings, by the act of uniformity, in 1662. He was juſtly celebrated, among other things, for his ſhort, pithy, ſpiritual and inſtructive ſayings. And as he was a man whoſe habitual concern was to act under the influence of that holy temper and diſpoſition which he recommended to others, it will ſurprize us the leſs to be informed that the people gave him the title of *Heavenly Henry*; and that by this title he was commonly known through all the country.

Mrs. Katharine Henry, the wife of Mr. Philip Henry, and the mother of Mr. Matthew Henry, was as great an ornament to her ſex, as her huſband was to his.

Mr. Philip Henry died, after a ſhort illneſs, June 24th, 1696, in the 65th year of his age. He had gone through his work with his uſual vigour and livelineſs, on the preceding Lord's day, June 21ſt.

Mrs. Henry, his worthy relict, died May 25th, 1707, in the 79th year of her age.

On the 4th of June following, her ſon preached an affectionate and highly reſpectful funeral ſermon for her, from Prov. xxxi. 38. "*Her children ariſe up and call her bleſſed.*"

Theſe were the parents from whom Mr. Matthew Henry had the honour and happineſs to deſcend; and he, through divine grace, proved worthy of ſuch a deſcent. Some have thought the ſon had in him thoſe qualities in which his parents did particularly excel—his father's ſtrong and ſolid judgment, with his mother's vivacity, affection and zeal. Indeed both his parents had a large ſhare of wiſdom and activity; and how much of theſe ſeveral qualifications, their ſon poſſeſſed, his life and labours will beſt diſcover.

Mr. Matthew Henry was born at Broad-Oak, October 18th, 1662, in Flintſhire, where his father reſided many years after his ejectment, on a family eſtate which he poſſeſſed, in right of his wife, and where he preached the word of life freely to his neighbours.

He was the ſecond child of his parents. His elder brother John, who was born a year before him, died in his ſixth year, of the meaſles. He was a child of extraordinary forwardneſs in learning, and of a very good diſpoſition.

Matthew Henry was himſelf ſick at the ſame time with his brother, of the ſame diſeaſe and in great danger; but God had a great work for him to do, and therefore ſpared the tender grape for the bleſſing that was in it; and a great bleſſing it has proved to be, to his family, to his friends, and to the church of God. He was but a weakly child, often ſubject to agues, and other indiſpoſitions, which yet were ſo ordered and limited by his heavenly Father, as neither to hurt his great capacity for learning, nor hinder his improvements, even in his early days. He was able to read a chapter in the bible very diſtinctly at about three years old, and with ſome obſervation of what he read; and, indeed, he very ſoon *put away childiſh things.*

He dated his conviction of ſin from the tenth year of his age; and though his childhood had leſs of vanity in it, than that of moſt perſons, yet it appeared at that early period, that he had a deep ſenſe of the corruption and ſinfulneſs of his nature; that his tender heart was greatly melted and broken for ſin; and that he was enabled through grace, thus early to offer unto God, the ſacrifice of *a broken and contrite ſpirit*, which God did not deſpiſe.

He that ſaid, *I love them that love me, and thoſe*

that ſeek me early ſhall find me, was doubtleſs, in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, pleaſed with that early oblation, which Mr. Henry made of the firſt fruits of his heart and life to God; and this was a happy earneſt of a plentiful harveſt both of grace and uſefulneſs here, and glory and bleſſedneſs hereafter.

It appears by his papers, that when he was but eleven years old, he was led into the vital part of religious wiſdom, the knowledge of himſelf, and of the ſtate of his own ſoul towards God; and that upon ſtrict examination, by the rule of God's word, he was enabled to draw the comfortable concluſion, that he was converted and pardoned. The method which God was pleaſed to make uſe of in producing theſe effects concerning him, appears to have been this: His ear and heart were opened betimes to the preaching of the word; he heard his good father and other miniſters preſs the duty of ſelf-examination, and lay down marks for trial, which was the conſtant way of the good old Puritan preachers, and God made it a means of found converſion to many ſouls.

Mr. Henry was taught of God to approve that kind of heart-ſearching preaching, and to apply it to himſelf. He went over the ſeveral ſigns of true grace, and found ſomething of them wrought in his own ſoul; and that his faith and comfort might not ſtand in tſte wiſdom of men, but in the word of God, he ſearched the ſcriptures, as the ground and touch-ſtone of all; and yet ſuſpecting the deceitfulneſs of

his own heart, he opened it freely and faithfully to his excellent father, deſiring his help in this great concern of his ſoul; and what greater joy could ſuch a father have, than to hear his ſon, his only ſon, at the age of ten or eleven years, thus enquiring after God, aſking the way towards heaven, with his face thitherward!

He always paid the greateſt duty and deference for his parents. He laid up their words in his heart. When he was very young he would attend with uncommon diligence upon his father's preaching, and would often be ſo affected with it, that as ſoon as the exerciſe was over, he would haſten to his cloſet, and there weep and pray over the word, and ſometimes would hardly be prevailed with to come down to dinner on the Lord's day, leſt the word ſhould ſlip away from him, or the warm impreſſions of it be loſt.

Among other ſigns of true converſion, by which he judged of his ſtate, he laid particular ſtreſs upon his love to the word of God. He could ſay even in early life, that he deſired it as the food of his ſoul; that he delighted in it; that his ſoul was brought into ſubjection to it; that he loved it for its purity. He loved to read and hear it. He rejoiced in the ſucceſs of it: and by his love to the word, he diſcovered the truth and ſincerity of his love to God. This was an early ſpecimen of his acquaintance with the Holy Scripture, and helped to fix his ſoul for that cloſe and conſtant

ſtudy of the Bible, which was the pleaſant buſineſs of his whole life, and made him ſo ready and mighty in thoſe Sacred Oracles.

It appears that from his very childhood, he had an inclination to the miniſtry. The delight he had in reading the Holy Scriptures, and learning the ſenſe of them; his love to all the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, as he came to be acquainted with them; and the pleaſure he took in writing down and repeating ſermons, were plain indications which way the bent of his ſoul lay. When he was very young, he loved to imitate preaching, not in a childiſh manner, but with a propriety, gravity, and judgment far beyond his years.

Mr. Tong, the writer of his Life, was informed by an aged chriſtian that lived near his father's houſe, that he would, when very young, meet frequently with ſome good people that uſed to pray together, and confer about ſpiritual concerns; and that he would not only pray with them, and repeat ſermons, but would ſometimes explain the chapters read, and enlarge upon them, very much to the benefit and comfort, and even to the wonder of thoſe that were preſent; and when one of them expreſſed ſome fear to his father, leſt his ſon ſhould be too forward, and fall into the ſnare of ſpiritual pride, his father replied, "*Come, let him go on, he fears God, and deſigns well, and I hope God will keep him and bleſs him.*

Mr. Henry had the principal part of his education under his excellent father, with whom he continued till he was eighteen years of age, growing up in wiſdom and goodneſs, and in favour with God and man. His father neglected no opportunity to cultivate ſuch a mind, and the helps which he had in his father's houſe for furniſhing himſelf in the knowledge of things human and divine, contributed, it ſeems, more to his fitneſs for his after work, than all the advantages he enjoyed in any other place. He was very expert in the learned languages, and eſpecially in the Hebrew, which had been made familiar to him from his childhood.

In the year 1680, he was placed by his father in the family, and under the care of that holy and faithful miniſter, Mr. Thomas Doolittle, who kept an academy at Iſlington, where he was univerſally beloved for his ſerious piety and moſt obliging behaviour.

In April 1685, by the advice of a particular friend, which both he and his father approved of, he went to Gray's Inn to ſtudy the law, ſtill keeping the miniſtry in view, as his ultimate object: and even while he was there, he not only promoted ſocial prayer, and religious conference with his particular friends, but would ſometimes expound the Scripture to them, and when he left them, he bade them farewell in an excellent lively diſcourſe, from 2 Theſſ. ii. 1. *By the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt and our gathering together to him.*" The hope of that

bleſſed *gathering together*, he recommended to himſelf and them, as their greateſt comfort, now they were parting one from another.

In the month of June 1686, he returned from London to Broad Oak, and ſtayed ſome months in the country, where he ſoon made it appear, that his ſtudy of the law, and his London converſation, had not drawn his heart away from the ſtudy of the Scriptures, or his deſigns for the miniſtry. He now began to preach pretty often, as a candidate for that work, and every where met with great acceptation and encouragement.

About this time, ſome occaſion led him to Cheſter, where the good people having heard of him, invited him to preach to them in the evening. He readily conſented to it, and for two or three evenings together, he preached at different private houſes, public liberty not being yet granted; and then it was that he contracted an acquaintance with ſome of the moſt eminent Diſſenters in Cheſter, which laid the ground-word of his great uſefulneſs among them for ſo many years afterwards.

He was ſolemnly ordained in London, after the manner of the Preſbyterians, to which denomination he belonged, in the month of May, 1687, and ſoon afterwards, purſuant to their earneſt requeſt, became the paſtor of a church of that denomination at Cheſter. The ſame month on which he was ordained, he took his leave of London, and made a very ſhort ſtay at his father's, at Broad Oak; for on the firſt of

June, ſeveral friends came from Cheſter to Broad Oak to meet him, and attended him thither. The day following being Thurſday, was ſometime before choſen to be the lecture day, and then he preached his firſt ſermon publicly, from 1 Cor. ii. 2. *I determined to know nothing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.* The people received him with joy and thankfulneſs. They received him as an angel of God; and indeed he was a meſſenger ſent from God to them. He came to them in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and proved a great bleſſing to many ſouls in Cheſter and the country round about.

Sometime in 1687, Mr. Henry married Miſs Katharine Hardware, a pious young perſon, with whom he lived but a ſhort time; for ſhe died of the ſmall pox, in child-bed, on the 14th of February, 1688-9. This was an heavy trial, not only to him but to her parents, ſhe being their only child. "The firſt word," ſays Mr. Tong, "Mr. Henry ſpoke to me on this occaſion, with many tears, was, *I know nothing could ſupport me under ſuch a loſs as this, but the good hope I have that ſhe is gone to heaven, and that in a little time I ſhall follow her thither.*" The offſpring of Mrs. Henry was ſpared, and lived to be married. This family loſs was repaired by a ſecond marriage, in July, 1690, to a lady of the Warburton family, in Cheſhire, who bore him many children, and whom he left a widow.

The order which he obſerved in his family was

very exemplary, like that of a Chriſtian and a Chriſtian miniſter. In this order an excellent example had been ſet him by his good father; and this example he followed, in all the parts and circumſtances of it. He called them together in the morning, as early as the ſtate of the family would permit; and did not uſe to defer it till late in the evening, being aſhamed to put God off with drowſy devotions.

He was conſtant in family worſhip. Whatever happened, or whoever was preſent, this duty was never neglected morning or evening. He was never tedious in it, but always full and comprehenſive, performing much in a little time, and yet far from hurrying it over as a taſk. His family-piety was not confined to the duties of divine worſhip (though in thoſe he abounded) but took the whole compaſs of relative religion. He was one of the moſt affectionate relations, and one of the moſt faithful friends in the world.

To his excellent parents in particular, he was a truly dutiful and affectionate child. Few children were ſo happy in both their parents as Mr. Henry; and few parents were ſo happy as they were in every one of their children, and in him eſpecially. By what has been related of him in his younger years, it is eaſy to diſcern, that he had learned to honour his father and mother betimes, and that from principles of grace as well as natural affection. Many excellent letters were ſent weekly by him to his

parents, when he was in London, full of honour and eſteem.

That abſence which tempts thouſands of young perſons to ſlight and forget their parents, made him love them more, and long to be with them, often declaring, "*No place was ſo good to him as his father's houſe.*"

When he had a family of his own, ſeated by the good providence of God, within leſs than half a day's journey of his father's houſe, he was pleaſed with that ſituation, as it gave him frequent opportunities of viſiting his parents, and being viſited by them. How often does his diary carry him to Broad-Oak! Not a month paſſed without ſome of thoſe journies being recorded in it, and great comfort expreſſed in finding and leaving good parents in health and uſefulneſs. It appeared by his papers that his father and he often contrived to meet at ſome place or other between Broad-Oak and Cheſter, and preach and pray together: thus making their affectionate viſits to each other, ſubſervient to purpoſes ſpiritual and divine.

It pleaſed God to exerciſe him with particular trials in his family, in the removal of ſeveral of his children and other relations by death; all which trials it was his concern to bear with chriſtian ſubmiſſion.

But when it pleaſed God to remove his dear father from him, then indeed he found he had occaſion for all the faith and patience that God had given him,

and that all was too little without freſh ſupplies. What is recorded in his diary reſpecting this event is ſo remarkabie that I ſhall tranſcribe a part of it.

" June 23, 1696.

" This afternoon about three o'clock my father's " ſervant came for the doctor, with the tidings that " my dear father was taken ſuddenly ill. I had then " ſome of my friends about me, and they were " chearful with me, but this ſtruck a damp upon " all. I had firſt thought not to have gone till the " next day, it being ſomewhat late and very wet, " and had writ half a letter to my dear mother, but " I could not help going, and I am glad I did go, " for I have often thought of that 2 Kings ii. 10. " *If thou ſee me when I am taken up from thee*, &c. " The doctor and I came to Broad-Oak about eight " o'clock, and found him in great extremity of pain, " nature (through his great and unwearied labours) " unable to bear up, and ſinking under the load. " As ſoon as he ſaw me he ſaid, *O ſon you are* " *welcome to a dying father, I am now ready to be* " *offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand.* " A little after midnight, my mother holding his " hands as he ſat in bed, and I holding the pillow " to his back, he very quietly, and without any " ſtruggling, groan or rattling, breathed out his " dear ſoul into the hands of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, " whom he had faithfully ſerved.

" And now what is this that God hath done unto " us? The thing itſelf and the ſuddenneſs of it, are

" very affecting; but the wormwood and the gall " in it is, that it looks like a token of God's diſ- " pleaſure to us that ſurvive. The Lord calls my " ſins to remembrance this day, that I have not " profited by him while he was with us as I " ſhould have done. Our family worſhip this " morning was very melancholy. The place was " *Allon Baccuth*, the oak of weeping. The little " children were greatly affected, and among the " neighbours was heard nothing but lamentation " and mourning. My dear mother caſt down but " not in deſpair; I, for my part, am full of confu- " ſion, and like a man aſtoniſhed."

As to his miniſterial labours, ſurely if ever man fulfilled his miniſtry ſince the apoſtolical age, Mr. Henry was the man. It ſhould not be forgotten that though he was but a weakly child, yet as he grew up, he became very ſtrong and healthy, and had, for near forty years together, a great ſhare of health, and a conſtitution fitted for the labours to which it was devoted. No body ought therefore to look upon his prodigious induſtry as a common meaſure for all others. Thoſe that have not the ſtrength of body, freedom and readineſs of thought, natural fervor and eaſe of expreſſion which he poſſeſſed, can no more come up to his ſtandard, as to the multitude, variety and excellency of his miniſterial ſervices, than a child can bear a ſtrong man's burden.

His labours were abundant at home among his

own people; for though his ſoul was too large to be confined to them, yet he was very ſenſible, they had the beſt title to his ſervices, and he never would injure them to ſupply other churches. His conſtant work on the Lord's day at Cheſter, was to pray ſix times in public, to ſing ſix times, to expound twice and preach twice; and this he did for many years together. It is to be recollected however, that all theſe exerciſes were comprehended in two public ſervices.

The expoſition of the Scriptures was a very pleaſant part of his work, both in his own houſe, and in the houſe of God. What his expoſitions were from the pulpit, may be gathered from what they appear to be from the preſs. His father's example led him to take delight in this part of his work, and made it eaſy to him; and while ſome commentators take a great deal of pains to make plain things dark, his endeavour always was to make dark things plain; and not only plain but moving and practical. He kept very cloſe and conſtant to his buſineſs of expounding, and never omitted it, even on a ſacrament day. In the time he was at Cheſter, he went through the whole bible more than once, and by this means his people were obſerved to excel in the acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures.

How great a talent he had in preaching, the world is not ignorant, many of his ſermons being publiſhed, and ſpread far and wide. His preaching was truly evangelical, ſpiritual and practical. He

loved to preach of Chriſt, and in his diary often declares, "He was beſt pleaſed, when he was upon that ſweet ſubject."

Another part of his conſtant work among his people was that of catechiſing. In this alſo he took great pleaſure, being full of affection and compaſſion for the ſouls of young people. God was pleaſed remarkably to own and bleſs his attempts of this kind. He longed for their converſion, and had the deſire of his ſoul, in ſeeing the good work begun in many of his catechumens.

Viſiting the ſick he took to be an eſſential part of his miniſtry, and he was very diligent in it, never refuſing to go either to rich or poor, when ſent for, unleſs hindered by invincible neceſſity. In this he did not confine his viſits to thoſe of his own congregation, or of his own opinion.

Nor were the poor priſoners, nor even the malefactors in the caſtle of Cheſter, forgotten by him. With them he frequently prayed, and to them he frequently preached, both before and after their trial and condemnation.

Beſides theſe ſervices, Mr. Henry preached a weekly lecture among his own people, as well as on national and congregational faſt and thankſgiving days. He alſo united with good people of other denominations, in preaching particular ſermons, with a view to promote a general reformation, and to check immorality and profaneneſs.

Nor were his abundant labours without ſucceſs.

On the contrary, he was eminently owned of God. It appears that in the year 1706, he had upwards of three hundred and fifty communicants in his church at Cheſter.

Mr. Henry was ſo conſtant to his own people, that he obſerved in his diary, on June 3, 1711, being then in London, That it was the firſt time he had been abſent from Cheſter on the firſt day of the month (the ſacrament day) for twenty-four years. But though his own flock were not neglected, yet he could not confine his ſervices to them. He had a juſt care for all the churches, and eſpecially thoſe that were within his line, viz. ſuch as he could viſit and return home at the week's end. He ſometimes between the ſabbaths took a circuit of near thirty miles, and lent his aſſiſtance to the diſſenting miniſters and churches that were in that compaſs, and he was always thankfully received by them.

But Mr. Henry is to be conſidered in the character of an author, as well as in that of a preacher. He publiſhed upwards of thirty ſermons and religious tracts. Among other excellent pieces, His Account of his Father's Life, His Communicant's Companion, and his Pleaſantneſs of a Religious Life, are peculiarly valuable. But the capital work of all, is his Expoſition of the Bible. He lived to go through the Old Teſtament quite, and through the New, as far as the end of the Acts of the Apoſtles. His intention was to have compleated the whole in another volume, but in that he

was prevented by death. This deficiency was however ſupplied by other perſons, and, as much as poſſible, out of writings left by Mr. Henry on, or copies taken from him in his expounding of, the remaining part of the New Teſtament.

Thoſe that put together theſe various parts of Mr. Henry's labours, will be deſirous to know what method he took, and what means he uſed to maintain and keep up ſo much life and induſtry for ſo many years, and to go on ſo unweariedly in his maſter's work. Among other things that might be mentioned as contributing to theſe purpoſes, were his prayerfulneſs and his careful redemption of time.

He was a very agreeable and improving companion. His good wit and good ſenſe, his candid and chearful temper, his openneſs of heart to his friends, and readineſs to communicate whatever might be either pleaſing or uſeful, and his great integrity and unaffected piety made his converſation extremely agreeable to all his friends. One that knew him intimately, uſed to ſay, "No man more ſerious in "religion, no man more pleaſant in converſation, "no man more honeſt in every thing."

But whatever were Mr. Henry's excellencies, they were in a great meaſure concealed from his own view. He had an humble ſenſe of his imperfections. Among other things he complains in his diary, of dulneſs in holy duties, particularly in ſecret; of unfixedneſs of thought, and wretched deſultorineſs. "Some ſpeak," ſays he, "of time

" well ſpent in thinking; but I find, unleſs in " ſpeaking, reading, or writing, my thinking doth " not turn to much account. Though I have had " comfort in ſome broken good thoughts, yet I can " ſeldom fix my heart to a chain of them. O that " the thoughts of my heart may be forgiven!"

In the year 1711, after having received repeated invitations, at different periods, from the congregation at Hackney, formerly under the paſtoral care of Dr. Bates, and more recently of Mr. Billio, he at length complied, and removed from Cheſter thither. No more need be ſaid as to his conduct at Hackney, than that, as to preaching, expounding, catechiſing, &c. it was the counterpart of what it had been at Cheſter: and beſides his ſtated labours at Hackney, he frequently preached occaſionally in London.

We now come to the cloſe of this valuable life. It is a pleaſing reflection, that though Mr. Henry had removed from Cheſter to Hackney, yet that he ſtill retained a peculiar affection for his old friends, and they a peculiar eſteem for him; and it appeared to be the will of Providence that he ſhould die near to them, and be buried among them.

In May 1714, he went to Cheſter, and towards the end of the next month, as he was upon his return to London, he was taken ill at Nantwich. He ſpent the 20th of June, which was his laſt Lord's-day, at Cheſter, and preached to his old friends. It is worthy of particular obſervation that

the two laſt ſabbaths he ſpent on earth, God ſhould direct him to a ſubject ſuitable to what he had appointed, and was ſo ſpeedily to be performed for him. Thoſe two Sabbaths he was wholly taken up with the thoughts of that eternal Sabbath and reſt, which the ſpirits of juſt men enjoy in heaven.

The laſt Sabbath but one, he preached from Heb. iv. 9. *There remaineth therefore a reſt to the people of God*; and the laſt of all from the firſt verſe of the ſame chapter, *Let us therefore fear, leſt a promiſe being left us of entering into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.*

June 21ſt he left his friends at Cheſter, and ſet forward to his family and people at Hackney. Very unfavourable ſymptoms, as to his health, were this day remarked concerning him; but he nevertheleſs ſtopped at Nantwich and preached a ſermon from Jer. xxxi. 18. *I have ſurely heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf thus, thou haſt chaſtiſed me, &c.*

The want of his uſual livelineſs was taken notice of by all. After ſermon he was adviſed to loſe a little blood for fear any inconvenience ſhould reſult from a fall which he had had that day from his horſe, on his way to Nantwich. He had intended to have gone to another place that afternoon, but his travelling was now at an end. He went to bed at a Mr. Motterſhed's houſe, and ſaid to his friends, "Pray "for me, for now I cannot pray for myſelf." When they were putting him to bed, he ſpoke of the excellency of ſpiritual comforts in a time of

need, and bleſſed God that he had thoſe comforts. He ſaid to a particular friend, "You have been "uſed to take notice of the ſayings of dying men; "this is mine, *That a life ſpent in the ſervice of Go* "*and communion with him is the moſt comfortable* "*and pleaſant life that any one can live in this world.*" He had but a reſtleſs night. About five o'clock in the morning he was ſeized with what the doctors agreed to be an apoplectic fit. He lay ſpeechleſs, with his eyes fixed, and about eight o'clock on Tueſday morning, June 22nd, he breathed out his precious ſoul into the hands of Chriſt, in the fifty-ſecond year of his age. The phyſicians could not impute his death to the fall he had from his horſe the day before, from which, he all along ſaid, he felt no inconvenience.

Very great reſpect was ſhown him at his funeral. He was buried, June the 24th, in Trinity-Church, in Cheſter, where the remains of ſome of his very dear relations had been before depoſited.

Though Mr. Henry's conſtitution was very healthful and ſtrong, yet there is a great deal of reaſon to believe he put too much upon it; and that, not only by his frequent and very fervent preaching, in which he uſed to ſweat profuſely, but chiefly by ſitting ſo long together in his ſtudy, and writing ſo much. This ſtopped the due circulation of the blood and ſpirits, and cauſed an obeſity of body and fluſhing in his face; but his ſtudy was more to him than the palaces of princes, and his work was his moſt pleaſant recreation.

It is particularly worthy of remark how ſoon Mr. Matthew Henry and his excellent father were called home, after their work was done. Mr. Philip Henry preached but three days before his death, and his ſon preached the very day before he died. *Bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.*

I ſhall ſubjoin an Elegy which was written by Mr. Henry on the occaſion of the death of his firſt wife, found in his ſtudy by his Couſin, who wrote a copy of it, which ſhe gave to a friend, after Mr. Henry's death.

To the precious memory of my dear wife, who was removed from me by death, Feb. 14, 1688.

Do thou, my melancholy ſoul, give vent
To tears, and griefs, and paſſions, altogether;
They've long enough been ſmother'd up, and pent;
Try this for once, try this experiment:
Let all crowd out, no matter whether
In verſe or proſe, or both, or neither;
Tho' the diſtemper ſhould return again,
Yet it is preſent eaſe to breathe a vein.
Come then, my ſoul, preſent before thee here
That darling creature,
Once thy own;
Thy ſecond ſelf, thy love, thy joy, thy dear,
Thy all that was, that can be, ſweet, in nature.
Bring back the good that's paſt, the joy that's gone;
'Twill ſoon be done,

The ideas cannot but be near at home;
They are the daily objects of thy view;
Behold how plain they ſtand,
As if of yeſterday's extract, ſo new!
Advance the idea of the faireſt face,
The lovelieſt body, and the ſweeteſt grace,
With all the beauties that thou canſt deviſe,
Moſt piercing, winning, charming to the eyes.
'Tis done; and yet the copy, after all,
Comes ſhort of the unparallel'd original.
View next the orient jewel ſet
In this rich cabinet;
It was a ſoul pure and refin'd;
'Twas meek, 'twas humble, 'twas made up of love,
'Twas rich, as if in it the graces ſtrove
The utmoſt of their wealth and pow'r to prove;
It was a little image of th' eternal mind.
Put altogether, was it not the maſter piece
Of grace and nature? Ah! ſure it was no leſs!
Too fair, too good, for earth—it was too fit
For heav'n to be detain'd long out of it.
Next ſee this ſweet, this precious one
Made thine: By a kind Providence, 'twas done;
'Twas thine by the moſt ſacred band of union.
Into thine arms with her did throng
A pleaſing crowd of comforts and delights,
Too thick, too many, to continue long
Here in a changing world made up of days and nights.
There thou didſt reſt thyſelf, my ſoul,
Like the magnetic needle at the pole;

With her didſt breathe in thine own element:
Such love, ſuch ſweetneſs, ſuch content
Made a perpetual ſpring throughout the year.
But where ſo many joys did meet,
Alas; they made this world too ſweet,
Tempted thee many a time to ſay, It's beſt being here.
Juſt heav'n does therefore turn the ſcale,
Cut off thoſe ſtreams of joy, and then they fail;
And, while it gives thee much deſired fruit,
A fatal ſtroke dries up the precious root.
If ſovereign wiſdom ſo decree, folly muſt not diſpute.
But the poor turtle dove that loſt his mate,
Has reaſon to bewail his ſolitary ſtate:
Do then, my ſoul, with a repeated pleaſing pain
Call back the wormwood and the gall again.
There's ſomething ſweet in ſuch a grief:
To have paid part the debt, one thinks is ſome relief;
And 'tis but part, the debt's ſo great:
My weeping eyes are debtor's yet.
Think next how, phœnix like, ſhe did expire
In her ſun-ſpicy fruitful neſt,
And from the bed of travail ſtraight retire
Into the bed of everlaſting reſt!
Think of the ſad farewell, the parting hour,
Which raviſh'd thee from all thine earthly pleaſure,
And left thee drooping in a diſmal ſhower
Of tears and griefs, ſtrip'd of ſo rich a treaſure!

Let theſe ſad thoughts be an alloy
To all thy tranſport of exceſſive joy;
Let them affect thee with the fading nature
Of all the comforts of the creature;
Expect not now that any joys will laſt
When thoſe are gone which thou didſt hold ſo faſt;
And 'tis the greateſt pain to ſee them fled and paſt.
Let the ſame thoughts engage thy beſt deſires to move
From earth below to heaven above;
For whilſt that deareſt joy of mine is there,
Why ſhould I dote on a continuance here;
And ſhould not rather ſay,
Haſten, Lord, haſten that ſweet day?
Why doth it ſtay and linger ſo,
And why its chariot wheels ſo ſlow?
That day which will, I truſt, through grace tranſlate
This drooping ſoul of mine into that joyful ſtate.
Methinks my heart pants to break forth and fly
Into that land of immortality:
For there, O there's my dear, my joy!
O that my ſoul were made more fit,
More ready and prepar'd for it.
The fruit that's ripeſt drops the firſt,
While that hangs on, that is the worſt.
Ripen, O Lord, my ſoul for heav'n
And then let that long-look'd-for call be given;

Then all my joys ſhall be reſtor'd,
And perfected, in my dear Lord:
And there I doubt not but with joy to meet
That deareſt creature once my own:
And the enjoyment will be ſweet
In ſinleſs, endleſs union:
For meeting once on that triumphant ſhore,
Sure it will be to meet, and part no more!

BEAUTIES OF HENRY.

GENESIS.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1, 2.

LET our make and place, as men, mind us of our duty as Chriſtians, which is always to keep heaven in our eye, and the earth under our feet.

Let us learn that atheiſm is folly, and atheiſts are the greateſt fools in nature; for they ſee there is a world that could not make itſelf, and yet they will not own there is a God that made it.

Ver. 3—5. In the new creation, the firſt thing wrought in the ſoul is light. The bleſſed Spirit captivates the will and affections by enlightening the underſtanding, ſo coming into the heart by the door, like the good ſhepherd whoſe own it is, while ſin and Satan, like thieves and robbers, climb up ſome other way. They that by ſin were darkneſs, by grace become light in the Lord.

O the power of the word of God! He ſpake and it was done; done really and effectually, and for perpetuity; not in ſhew only, and to ſerve a preſent turn, for he commanded and it ſtood faſt: with him it was *dictum, factum*, a word, and a world.

Ver. 6—8. The height of the heavens ſhould mind us of God's ſupremacy, and the infinite diſtance that is between us and him; the brightneſs of the heavens and their purity ſhould mind us of his glory and majeſty and perfect holineſs; the vaſtneſs of the heavens and their encompaſſing the earth and influence upon it, ſhould mind us of his immenſity and univerſal providence.

Ver. 9—13. Waters and ſeas oft in ſcripture ſignify troubles and afflictions, Pſal. lxix. 2, 14, 15.—xlii. 7. God's own people are not exempted from theſe in this world, but it is their comfort that they are only *waters under the heaven*, there are none in heaven, and that they are all in the place that God hath appointed them, and within the bounds that he hath ſet them.

It is good to provide things neceſſary before we have occaſion to uſe them: before the beaſts and man were made, here was graſs and herb prepared for them.

Ver. 14—19. The beſt and moſt honourable way of ruling is by giving light, and doing good: thoſe command reſpect that live an uſeful life, and ſo ſhine as lights.

The revolutions of the day and night oblige us to the ſolemn ſacrifice of prayers and praiſes, every morning and evening.

Ver. 20—23. The work of creation not only proceeded gradually from one thing to another, but roſe and advanced gradually, from that which was

leſs excellent to that which was more ſo; teaching us to preſs towards perfection, and endeavour that our laſt works may be our beſt works.

The curious formation of the bodies of animals, their different ſizes, ſhapes, and natures, with the admirable powers of the ſenſitive life with which they are endued, when duly conſidered, ſerve not only to ſilence and ſhame the objections of atheiſts and infidels; but to raiſe high thoughts, and high praiſes of God in pious and devout ſouls, Pſal. civ. 25, &c.

Ver. 26—28. Obſerve, That man was made laſt of all the creatures, that it might not be ſuſpected that he had been any way a helper to God in the creation of the world. That queſtion muſt be for ever humbling and mortifying to him, *where waſt thou, or any of thy kind*, when I laid the foundations of the earth? Job xxxviii. 4. Yet it was both an honour and a favour to him that he was made laſt: an honour, for the method of the creation was to advance from that which was leſs perfect to that which was more ſo; and a favour, for it was not fit he ſhould be lodged in the palace deſigned for him, till it was compleatly fitted up and furniſhed for his reception.

Obſerve, That man was made in God's image, and after his likeneſs. Man was not made in the likeneſs of any creatures that went before him, but in the likeneſs of his Creator; yet ſtill between God and man there is an infinite diſtance.

God's image upon man conſiſts in theſe three things:

1. In his nature and conſtitution, not that of his body, for God has not a body, but that of his ſoul.

2. In his place and authority. *Let us make man in our image, and let him have dominion.* As he has the government of the inferior creatures, he is as it were God's repreſentative, or vice-roy, upon earth: they are not capable of fearing and ſerving God, therefore God has appointed them to fear and ſerve man.

3. In his purity and rectitude. God's image upon man conſiſts in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and true holineſs, Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10.

Our firſt father Adam was confined to one wife, and if he had put her away there was no other for him to marry, which plainly intimated that the bond of marriage is not to be diſſolved at pleaſure.

God is a great houſe-keeper, a very rich and bountiful one, that ſatisfies the deſire of every living thing.

Let this encourage God's people to caſt their care upon him, and not be ſolicitous what they ſhall eat, and what they ſhall drink. He that provided for Adam without his care, and ſtill provides for all the creatures without their care, will not let thoſe that truſt him want any good thing, Matth. vi. 26. He that feeds his birds will not ſtarve his babes.

When we come to review our works, we find to our ſhame that much has been very bad; but when

God reviewed his, all was very good. Of each days work (except the ſecond) it was ſaid that it was good, but now it is very good. Now man was made, who was the chief of the ways of God, who was deſigned to be the viſible image of the Creator's glory, and the mouth of the creation in his praiſes. Now all was made, every part was good, but all together very good. The glory and goodneſs, the beauty and harmony, of God's works, both of providence and grace, as this of creation, will beſt appear when they are perfected.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1—3. The ſabbath-day is a bleſſed day, for God bleſſed it, and that which he bleſſeth is bleſſed indeed. God hath put an honour upon it, hath appointed us on that day to bleſs him, and hath promiſed on that day to meet and bleſs us.

Ver. 4—7. Here is a name given to the Creator which we have not yet met with, and that is, Jehovah, the LORD, in capital letters, which is conſtantly uſed in our Engliſh tranſlation, to intimate that in the original it is Jehovah. All along in the firſt chapter he was called Elohim, a God of power; but now Jehovah Elohim, a God of power and perfection, a finiſhing-God. As we find him known by his name Jehovah, when he appeared to perform what he had promiſed, Exod. vi. 3. ſo now we have him known by that name, when he had perfected what he had begun, Jehovah is that great and in-

communicable name of God, which ſpeaks his having his being of himſelf, and his giving being to all things. Fitly, therefore, is he called by that name, now heaven and earth were finiſhed. Though God ordinarily works by means, yet he is not tied to them; but when he pleaſes he can do his own work without them. As the plants were produced before the ſun was made, ſo they were before there was either rain to water the earth, or man to till it. Therefore though we muſt not tempt God in the neglect of means, yet we muſt truſt God in the want of means. Obſerve, the mean original, and yet the curious ſtructure, of the body of man. The matter was deſpicable: He was made *of the duſt of the ground*, a very unlikely thing to make a man of; but the ſame infinite power that made the world of nothing, made man, its maſter-piece, of next to nothing. He was made of the duſt, the ſmall duſt, ſuch as is upon the ſurface of the earth. He was not made of gold duſt, powder of pearl, or diamond duſt; but common duſt, duſt of the ground. And we alſo are of the earth, for we are his offspring, and of the ſame mold. Our foundation is on the earth, Job iv. 19. Our fabrick is earthy, and the faſhioning of it like that of an earthen veſſel, Job x. 9. Our food is out of the earth, Job xxviii. 5. Our familiarity is with the earth, Job xvii. 14. Our fathers are in the earth, and our own final tendency is to it; and what then have we to be proud of? Iſa. li. 1.

Obſerve the high original, and yet the admirable ſerviceableneſs, of the ſoul of man. It takes its riſe from the breath of heaven, and is produced by it. It was not made of the earth as the body was: it is pity then it ſhould cleave to the earth and mind earthly things. Let the ſoul, which God hath breathed into us, breathe after him; and let it be for him, ſince it is from him. Since the extraction of the ſoul is ſo noble, and its nature and faculties ſo excellent, let us not be of thoſe fools that deſpiſe their own ſouls, by preferring their bodies before them, Prov. xv. 32.

Ver. 8—15. Man conſiſting of body and ſoul, a body made out of the earth, and a rational immortal ſoul, the breath of heaven, we have in theſe verſes the proviſion that was made for the happineſs of both. He that made him took care to make him happy, if he could but have kept himſelf ſo, and known when he was well. That part of man by which he is allied to the world of ſenſe, was made happy, for he was put in the paradiſe of God; that part by which he is allied to the world of ſpirits was well provided for, for he was taken into covenant with God.

Obſerve, The place appointed for Adam's reſidence was a garden; not an ivory houſe, nor a palace overlaid with gold; but a garden, furniſhed and adorned by nature, not by art. What little reaſon have men to be proud of ſtately and magnificent buildings, when it was the happineſs of man in innocency that he needed none? As clothes came in

with ſin, ſo did houſes. The heaven was the roof of Adam's houſe, and never was any roof ſo curiouſly cieled and painted. The earth was his floor, and never was any floor ſo richly inlaid. The ſhadow of the trees was his retirement, under them were his dining rooms, his lodging rooms, and never were any rooms ſo finely hung as theſe. Solomon's in all their glory were not arrayed like them. The better we can accommodate ourſelves to plain things, and the leſs we indulge ourſelves with thoſe artificial delights, which have been invented to gratify men's pride and luxury, the nearer we approach to a ſtate of innocency. Nature is content with a little, and that which is moſt natural, grace with leſs, but luſt with nothing. Havilah had gold, and ſpices, and precious ſtones; but Eden had that which was infinitely better, the tree of life and communion with God. So we may ſay of the Africans and Indians, they have the gold, but we have the goſpel. The gold of their land is good, but the riches of ours infinitely better.

It adds much to the comfort of any condition, if we have plainly ſeen God going before us, and putting us into it. If we have not forced providence, but followed it, and taken the hints of direction it has given us, we may hope to find a paradiſe there, where otherwiſe we could not have expected it.

Secular employments will very well conſiſt with a ſtate of innocency, and a life of communion with God. The ſons and heirs of heaven, while they

are here in this world, have ſomething to do about this earth, which muſt have its ſhare of their time and thoughts, and if they do it with an eye to God, they are as truly ſerving him in it, as when they are upon their knees. There is a true pleaſure in the buſineſs which God calls us to, and employs us in. Adam's work was ſo far from being an alloy, that it was an addition to the pleaſures of paradiſe. He could not have been happy if he had been idle. It is ſtill a law, he that will not work has no right to eat, 2 Theſſ. iii. 10. Prov. xxvii. 23.

As we are not allowed to be idle in this world, and to do nothing, ſo we are not allowed to be wilful, and do what we pleaſe. When God had given man a dominion over the creatures, he would let him know, that ſtill he himſelf was under the government of his Creator.

Ver. 16, 17. Adam is tried with a poſitive law, not to eat of the fruit *of the tree of knowledge*. Now it was very proper to make trial of his obedience by ſuch a command as this,

1. Becauſe the reaſon of it is fetched purely from the will of the law-maker. Adam had in his nature an averſion to that which was evil in itſelf, and therefore he is tried in a thing which was evil only becauſe it was forbidden; and being in a ſmall thing it was the more fit to prove his obedience by.

2. Becauſe the reſtraint of it is laid upon the deſires of the fleſh and of the mind, which, in the corrupt nature of man, are the two great fountains

of ſin. This prohibition checked both his appetite towards ſenſitive delights, and his ambition of curious knowledge; that his body might be ruled by his ſoul, and his ſoul by his God.

Ver. 18—20. Family ſociety, if that be agreeable, is a redreſs ſufficient for the grievance of ſolitude. He that has a good God, a good heart, and a good wife to converſe with, and yet complains he wants converſations, would not have been eaſy and content in Paradiſe, for Adam himſelf had no more: yet even before Eve was created we do not find that he complained of being alone, knowing that he *was not alone, for the Father was with him.* Thoſe that are moſt ſatisfied in God, and his favour, are in the beſt way, and in the beſt frame, to receive the good things of this life, and ſhall be ſure of them, as far as infinite wiſdom ſees good.

Ver. 21—25. Adam was firſt formed, then Eve, 1 Tim. ii. 13. and ſhe was made *of* the man, and *for* the man, 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9. all which are urged there as reaſons for the humility, modeſty, ſilence, and ſubmiſſiveneſs of that ſex in general; and particularly, the ſubjection and reverence which wives owe to their own huſbands. Yet man, being made laſt of the creatures, as the beſt and moſt excellent of all, Eve's being made after Adam, and out of him, puts an honour upon that ſex, as the glory of the man, 1 Cor. xi. 7. If man be the head, ſhe is the crown; a crown to her huſband, the crown of the viſible creation. The man was duſt refined, but the wo-

man was duſt double-refined; one remove further from the earth. The woman was *made of a rib out of the ſide of Adam:* not made out of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him; but out of his ſide to be equal with him; under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.

Here we have, the marriage of the woman to Adam. Marriage is honourable, but this ſurely was the moſt honourable marriage that ever was, in which God himſelf had all along an immediate hand. Marriages (they ſay) are made in heaven: we are ſure this was; for the man, the woman, the match, were all God's own work. He, by his power, made them both, and now, by his ordinance, made them one. That wife that is of God's making by ſpecial grace, and of God's bringing by ſpecial providence, is likely to prove a help meet to her huſband.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1—5. There is not any thing by which the devil ſerves himſelf and his own intereſt, more than by unſanctified ſubtilty.

Satan tempted Eve, that by her he might tempt Adam: ſo he tempted Job by his wife, and Chriſt by Peter. It is his policy to ſend temptations by unſuſpected hands; theirs that have moſt intereſt in us, and influence upon us.

It is the ſubtilty of Satan to blemiſh the reputation of the divine law, as uncertain, or unreaſonable, and

ſo to draw people to ſin: it is therefore our wiſdom to keep up a firm belief of, and a high reſpect for, the command of God.

It is a dangerous thing to treat with a temptation, which ought at firſt to be rejected with diſdain and abhorrence. The garriſon that ſounds a parley is not far from being ſurrendered. Thoſe that would be kept from harm muſt keep out of harms way. See Prov. xiv. 7—19, 27.

Wavering faith and wavering reſolutions give great advantage to the tempter.

No condition will of itſelf bring contentment, unleſs the mind be brought to it. Adam was not eaſy, no not in Paradiſe, nor the angels in their firſt ſtate, Jude 6.

The devil draws people into his intereſt by ſuggeſting to them hard thoughts of God, and falſe hopes of benefit and advantage by ſin. Let us therefore in oppoſition to him always think well of God as the beſt good, and think ill of ſin as the worſt of evils. Thus let us reſiſt the devil and he will flee from us.

Ver. 6—8. When there is thought to be no more harm in forbidden fruit than in other fruit, ſin lies at the door, and Satan ſoon carries the day.

The way of ſin is down hill. A man cannot ſtop himſelf when he will. The beginning of it is as the breaking forth of water, to which it is hard to ſay, hitherto it ſhall come and no further: therefore it is our wiſdom to ſuppreſs the firſt motions of ſin,

and to leave it off before it be meddled with. *Obſta principiis.*

Ver. 11—13. Adam lays all the blame upon his wife. She gave me of the tree, and preſſed me to eat it, which I did only to oblige her: a frivolous excuſe. He ought to have taught her, not to have been taught by her; and it was no hard matter to determine which of the two he muſt be ruled by, his God or his wife.

Eve lays all the blame upon the ſerpent: *The ſerpent beguiled me.* Sin is a brat that nobody is willing to own: a ſign it is a ſcandalous thing. Thoſe that are willing enough to take the pleaſure and profit of ſin, are backward enough to take the blame and ſhame of it.

The ſerpent and the woman had juſt now been very familiar and friendly in diſcourſe about forbidden fruit, and a wonderful agreement there was between them; but here they are irreconcilably at variance. Sinful friendſhips juſtly end in mortal feuds. Thoſe that unite in wickedneſs will not unite long.

Ver. 17—19. How admirably the ſatisfaction our Lord Jeſus made by his death and ſufferings, anſwered the ſentence paſſed upon our firſt parents!

1. Did travailing pains come in with ſin? We read of the *travail of Chriſt's ſoul*, Iſa. liii. 11. and the pains of death he was held by, are called ὠδῖνας Acts ii. 24. *the pains of a woman in travail.*

2. Did ſubjection come in with ſin? Chriſt was made under the law, Gal. iv. 4.

3. Did the curſe come in with ſin? Chriſt was made a curſe for us, died a curſed death, Gal. iii. 13.

4. Did thorns come in with ſin? He was crowned with thorns for us.

5. Did ſweat come in with ſin? He ſweat for us, as it had been great drops of blood.

6. Did ſorrow come in with ſin? He was a man of ſorrows, his ſoul was in his agony exceeding ſorrowful.

7. Did death come in with ſin? He became obedient unto death. Thus is the plaiſter as wide as the wound. Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt!

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1, 2. Many ſuppoſe that Eve had a conceit that this ſon [Cain] was the promiſed ſeed, and therefore ſhe thus triumphed in him: and it may be read, *I have gotten a man the Lord: i. e.* the God-man. If ſo, ſhe was wretchedly miſtaken, as Samuel, when he ſaid, *Surely the Lord's anointed is before me*, 1 Sam. xvi. 6.

When children are born, who can foreſee what they will prove? He that was thought to be a man the Lord, or at leaſt *a man for the Lord*, and for his ſervice as a prieſt of the family, became an enemy to the Lord. The leſs we expect from creatures, the more tolerable will diſappointments be.

Obſerve, Cain and Abel had each a calling. Though they were heirs-apparent to the world, their birth noble, and their poſſeſſions large, yet

they were not brought up in idleneſs. It is the will of God we ſhould every one of us have ſomething to do in this world. Parents ought to bring up their children to buſineſs. *Give them a Bible and a calling* (ſaid good Mr. Dodd) *and God be with them.*

Abel choſe that employment which did moſt befriend contemplation and devotion, for that hath been looked upon as the advantage of a paſtoral life. Moſes and David kept ſheep, and in their ſolitudes converſed with God. Note, That calling and condition of life is beſt for us, and to be choſen by us, which is beſt for our ſouls; that which leaſt expoſes us to ſin, and gives us moſt opportunity of ſerving and enjoying God.

Ver. 3—5. Obſerve, That the religious worſhip of God is no novel invention, but an antient inſtitution. It is that which was from the beginning, 1 John i. 1. It is the good old way, Jer. vi. 16.

Obſerve, That hypocrites may be found going as far as the beſt of God's people in the external ſervices of religion. Cain brought an offering with Abel; nay, Cain's offering is mentioned firſt, as if he were the more forward of the two. An hypocrite may poſſibly hear as many ſermons, ſay as many prayers, and give as much alms as a good Chriſtian; and yet for want of ſincerity come ſhort of acceptance with God. *The Phariſee and Publican went to the temple* to pray, Luke xviii. 10.

Obſerve, The different ſucceſs of their devotions. That which is to be aimed at in all acts of religion

is God's acceptance. We ſpeed well if we attain that; but in vain do we worſhip if we miſs of that, 2 Cor. v. 9. Perhaps to a ſtander-by, the ſacrifices of Cain and Abel would have ſeemed both alike good. Adam accepted them both, but God did not, *who ſeeth not as man ſeeth.*

1. There was a difference in the characters of the perſons offering. Cain was a wicked man, led an ill life, under the reigning power of the world and the fleſh, and therefore his ſacrifice was an *abomination to the Lord*, Prov. xv. 8. But Abel was a righteous man. He is called righteous Abel, Matt. xxiii. 35. His heart was upright and his life was pious. He was one of thoſe whom *God's countenance beholds*, Pſalm xi. 7. and whoſe prayer therefore is his delight, Prov. xv. 8. God had reſpect to him as a holy man, and therefore to his offering as a holy offering.

2. There was a difference in the offerings they brought. It is expreſſly ſaid, Heb. xi. 4. Abel's was a *more excellent ſacrifice than* Cain's, either in the nature, or in the qualities of the offering. Cain brought *of the fruit of the ground*, any thing that came next to hand, what he had not occaſion for himſelf, or was not marketable; but Abel was curious in the choice of his offering; not the lame, nor the lean, nor the refuſe; but the *firſtlings of the flock*, the beſt he had; *and the fat thereof*, the beſt of thoſe beſt. Hence the Hebrew doctors give it for a general rule, that every thing that is for the name of

the good God, must be the goodliest and best. It is fit that he who is the first and best, should have the first and best of our time, strength, and service.

3. The great difference was this, that Abel offered in faith, and Cain did not. There was a difference in the principle upon which they went. Abel offered with an eye to God's will as his rule, and God's glory as his end, and in dependence upon the promise of a Redeemer. But Cain did what he did only for company, or to save his credit, not in faith, and so it turned into sin to him.

Envy is a sin that commonly carries with it both its own discovery in the paleness of the looks, and its own punishment in the rottenness of the bones.

Ver. 8. The first that dies is a saint, one that was accepted and beloved of God, to shew that though the promised seed was so far to destroy him that had the power of death, as to save believers from its sting, yet that still they should be exposed to its stroke. The first that went to the grave went to heaven. God would secure to himself the first fruits, the first born to the dead, that first opened the womb into another world. Let this take off the terror of death, that it was betimes the lot of God's chosen, which alters the property of it. Nay, the first that dies is a martyr, and dies for his religion; and of such it may more truly be said than of soldiers, that they die in the bed of honour. Abel's death has not only no curse in it, but it has a crown in it; so admirably is the property of death al-

tered, that it is not only become innocent and inoffenſive to thoſe that die *in* Chriſt, but honourable and glorious to thoſe that die *for* him.

Ver. 9—12. How well is it for us that the blood of Chriſt ſpeaks better things than that of Abel, Heb. xii. 24. Abel's blood cried for vengeance, Chriſt's blood cries for pardon.

Ver. 19—22. Obſerve, It was one of the degenerate race of Cain who firſt tranſgreſſed that original law of marriage, that two only ſhould be one fleſh. Hitherto one man had but one wife at a time, but Lamech took two. From the beginning it was not ſo, Mal. ii. 15. Matt. xix. 5.

That when an ill cuſtom is begun by ill men, ſometimes men of better characters are, through unwarineſs, drawn in to follow them. Jacob, David, and many others, who were otherwiſe good men, were afterwards enſnared in this ſin which Lamech had began. Worldly things are the only things that carnal wicked people ſet their hearts upon, and are moſt ingenious and induſtrious about. So it was with this impious race of curſed Cain. Here was a father of ſhepherds and a father of muſicians, but not a father of the faithful. Here is one to teach in braſs and iron, but none to teach the good knowledge of the Lord. Here are devices how to be rich, and how to be mighty, and how to be merry; but nothing of God, or of his fear and ſervice, mong them. Preſent things fill the heads of moſt people.

Ver. 25, 26. God gave Adam and Eve to ſee the rebuilding of their family, which was ſorely ſhattered and weakened by that ſad event, the murder of Abel; for they ſaw *another ſeed inſtead of Abel.* Obſerve, God's kindneſs and tenderneſs towards his people, in his providential dealings with them: when he takes away one comfort from them, he gives them another inſtead of it, which may prove a greater bleſſing to them than that was, in which they thought their lives were bound up.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1—5. Obſerve, *God created man.* Man is not his own maker, therefore he muſt not be his own maſter; but the author of his being muſt be the director of his motions, and the center of them.

That which is moſt obſervable concerning Seth is, that Adam begat *him in his own likeneſs after his image.* Adam was made in the image of God, but when he was fallen and corrupt, he begat a ſon in his *own* image, ſinful and defiled, frail and mortal, and miſerable like himſelf: not only a man like himſelf, conſiſting of body and ſoul; but a ſinner like himſelf, guilty and obnoxious, degenerate and corrupt. This was Adam's own likeneſs, the reverſe of that divine likeneſs, in which Adam was made: but having loſt it himſelf, he could not convey it to his ſeed. Note, That grace doth not run

in the blood, but corruption doth. A ſinner begets a ſinner, but a ſaint doth not beget a ſaint.

Ver. 6—19. We have here all that the Holy Ghoſt thought fit to leave upon record concerning five of the patriarchs before the flood, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, and Jared. Concerning each of them, it is ſaid, *and he died.* It is implied in the numbering of the years of their life, that their life, when thoſe years were numbered and finiſhed, came to an end; and yet it is ſtill repeated, *and he died*; to ſhew that death paſſed upon all men, and that it is good for us particularly to obſerve and improve the deaths of others, for our own edification. Such a one was a ſtrong healthful man, but he died. Such a one was a great and rich man, but he died. Such a one was a wiſe politic man, but he died. Such a one was a very good man, perhaps a very uſeful man, but he died.

Ver. 21—24. The Holy Spirit inſtead of ſaying Enoch lived, ſaith Enoch walked with God, for it is the life of a good man to walk with God. This was the buſineſs of Enoch's life, his conſtant care and work. While others lived to themſelves and the world, he lived to God. It was the joy and ſupport of his life. Communion with God was to him better than life itſelf: *To me to live is Chriſt*, Phil. i. 21.

Obſerve, The continuance of his religion. He walked with God three hundred years; as long as

he continued in this world. The hypocrite will not pray always; but the real ſaint that acts from a principle, and makes religion his choice, will perſevere to the end, and walk with God while he lives, as one that hopes to live for ever with him, Pſalm civ. 33.

Obſerve, his glorious removal to a better world. He was tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee death; and was not found, becauſe God had tranſlated him, Heb. ii. 5. He was thus tranſlated, when he had lived but three hundred and ſixty five years, which as men's ages went then, was in the midſt of his days; for there was none of the patriarchs, before the flood, that did not more than double that age. Note, God often takes them ſooneſt whom he loves beſt; and the time they loſe on earth is gained in heaven to their unſpeakable advantage. God took him body and ſoul to himſelf in the heavenly Paradiſe, by the miniſtry of angels, as afterwards he took Elijah. He was changed as thoſe ſaints ſhall be that will be found alive at Chriſt's ſecond coming. Whenever a good man dies, God takes him, fetches him hence, and receive him to himſelf. The apoſtle adds concerning Enoch, that before his tranſlation he had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God, and this was the good report he obtained. Note, Walking with God pleaſeth God. We cannot walk with God ſo as to pleaſe him, but by faith. God himſelf will put an honour upon thoſe that by faith walk with him ſo as to pleaſe him. Thoſe whoſe

converſation in the world is truly holy, ſhall find their removal out of it truly happy.

Ver. 25—27. Concerning Methuſelah, obſerve the ſignification of his name, which ſome think was prophetical, his father Enoch being a prophet. *Methuſelah* ſignifies, *he dies, there is a dart*, or, a ſending forth, viz. of the deluge, which came the very year that Methuſelah died. This is obſervable that the longeſt liver that ever was, carried death in his name, that he might be minded of its coming ſurely, though it came ſlowly.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 4, 5. Thoſe that have ſo much power over others as to be able to oppreſs them, have ſeldom ſo much power over themſelves as not to oppreſs. Great might is a very great ſnare to many.

The wickedneſs of a people is great indeed, when the moſt notorious ſinners are men of renown among them. Things are bad when ill men are not only honoured, notwithſtanding their wickedneſs, but honoured *for* their wickedneſs, and the vileſt men exalted. Wickedneſs is then great, when great men are wicked.

Ver. 6, 7. God repented that he had made man, but we never find him repenting that he redeemed man, though that was a work of much greater expence; becauſe ſpecial and effectual grace is given to ſecure the great ends of redemption, ſo that thoſe

gifts and callings are without repentance, Rom. ii. 29. Obſerve, when God repented that he had made man, he reſolved to deſtroy man. Thus they that truly repent of ſin, will reſolve in the ſtrength of God's grace, to mortify ſin, and to deſtroy it. We do but mock God in ſaying we are ſorry for our ſin, and it grieves us to the heart, if we continue to indulge it. In vain do we pretend a change of our mind, if we do not evidence it by a change of our way.

Ver. 8—10. Noah walked with God as Enoch had done before him. He was not only honeſt but devout. Note, God looks down upon thoſe with an eye of favour, who ſincerely look up to him with an eye of faith.

But that which crowns his character is, that thus he was, and thus he did in his generation, in that corrupt degenerate age, in which his lot was coſt. It is eaſy to be religious when religion is in faſhion; but it is an evidence of ſtrong faith and reſolution to ſwim againſt a ſtream to heaven, and to appear for God, when no one elſe appears for him. So Noah did, and it is upon record to his immortal honour.

Ver. 11, 12. Wickedneſs, as it is the ſhame of the human nature, ſo it is the ruin of human ſociety, takes away conſcience and the fear of God, and men become beaſts and devils to one another, like the *fiſhes of the ſea, where the greater devour the leſs.*

When wickedneſs is become general and univerſal, ruin is not far off. While there is a remnant

of praying people in a nation, to empty the meaſure as it fills, judgements may be kept off a great while; but when all hands are at work to pull down the fences by ſin, and none ſtand in the gap to make up the breach, what can be expected but an inundation of wrath?

Ver. 13—21. Singular piety ſhall be recompenſed with diſtinguiſhing ſalvations, which are in a ſpecial manner obligatory. Obſerve, God doth not bid Noah *paint* the ark, but *pitch* it. If God give us habitations that are ſafe and warm, and wholeſome, we are bound to be thankful, though they are not magnificent, nor nice.

God promiſeth Noah, that he and his ſhould be preſerved alive in the ark. Note, What we do in obedience to God, we ourſelves are likely to have the comfort and benefit of.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1—4. Note, It is good to belong to the family of a godly man: it is ſafe and comfortable to dwell under ſuch a ſhadow. One of Noah's ſons was Ham, who proved afterwards but an ill man, yet he was ſaved in the ark; which intimates,

1. That wicked children often fare the better for the ſake of their godly parents.

2. That there is a mixture of bad with good in the beſt ſocieties on earth, and we are not to think it ſtrange. In Noah's family there was a Ham, and in

Chriſt's family there was a Judas. There is no perfect purity on this ſide heaven. This call to Noah was a type of the call which the goſpel gives to poor ſinners. Chriſt is an ark already prepared, in whom alone we can be ſafe when death and judgment come. Now the burden of the ſong is, Come, come. The word ſaith, Come: miniſters ſay, Come: the Spirit ſaith, Come, come into the ark.

Ver. 5—10. Obſerve, Though men were to be reduced to ſo ſmall a number, and it would be very deſirable to have the world ſpeedily re-peopled, yet Noah's ſons were to have but one wife each, which ſtrengthens the arguments againſt having many wives; for, from the beginning of this new world it was not ſo. As at firſt God made, ſo now he kept alive, but one woman for one man; ſee Mat. xix. 4, 8.

Ver. 11, 12. Note 1. Deſolating judgments to come not till God has provided for the ſecurity of his own people, ſee Gen. xix. 22. I can *do nothing till thou be come thither*; and we find Rev. vii. 3. the winds are held till the ſervants of God are ſealed.

2. When good men are removed, judgments are not far off, for they are *taken away from the evil to come*, Iſa. lvii. 1. When they are called into their chambers, hid in the grave, hid in heaven, then God is *coming out of his place to puniſh*, Iſa. xxvi. 20, 21.

All the creatures are ready to fight againſt ſinful man, and any of them is able to be the inſtrument of his ruin, if God but take off the reſtraints by

which they are held in, during the day of God's patience.

Ver. 13—16. Noah muſt for awhile ſubmit to the confinements and inconveniences of the ark, in order to his preſervation for a new world; ſo thoſe that come into Chriſt to be ſaved by him, muſt deny themſelves, both in ſufferings and ſervices.

Thoſe that by faith come into Chriſt, the ark, ſhall by the power of God be ſhut in and kept as a ſtrong hold, *by the power of God*, 1 Pet. i. 5. God put Adam into Paradiſe, but he did not ſhut him in, and ſo he threw himſelf out: but when he put Noah into the ark, and ſo when he brings a ſoul to Chriſt, he inſures his ſalvation. Eternal life is not in our own keeping, but in the Mediator's hand.

Ver. 17—19. Obſerve, 1. The waters which broke down every thing elſe, bore up the ark. That which to unbelievers is a ſavour of death unto death, is to the faithful a ſavour of life unto life.

2. The more the waters increaſed, the higher the ark was lifted up towards heaven. Thus ſanctified afflictions are ſpiritual promotions; and as troubles abound, conſolations much more abound.

Ver. 21—24. Thoſe that are not found in Chriſt, the ark, are certainly undone, undone for ever.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1—3. Thoſe that remember God ſhall certainly be remembered by him, how deſolate and diſconſolate ſoever their condition may be.

Thoſe whom God remembers, he remembers effectually for good. He remembers to ſave us, that we may remember to ſerve him.

When afflictions have done the work for which they are ſent, whether killing work or curing work, they ſhall be removed. God's word ſhall not return void, Iſa. lv. 10, 11.

God uſually works deliverance for his people gradually, that the day of ſmall things may not be deſpiſed, nor the day of great things deſpaired of, Zech. iv. 10. Prov. iv. 18.

Ver. 4, 5. God has times and places of reſt for his people after their toſſings: and many a time he provides for their ſeaſonable and comfortable ſettlement, without their own contrivance, and quite beyond their own foreſight.

Ver. 6—12. Deſires of releaſe out of trouble, earneſt expectations of it, and enquiries concerning its advances towards us, will very well conſiſt with the ſincerity of faith and patience.

The dove is an emblem of a gracious ſoul, that finding no reſt for its foot, no ſolid peace or ſatisfaction in this world, this deluged defiling world, returns to Chriſt as to its ark, as to its Noah: and as Noah put forth his hand, and took the dove and

pulled her into him, into the ark; ſo Chriſt will graciouſly preſerve, and help, and welcome thoſe that fly to him for reſt.

Ver. 13, 14. God conſults our benefit, rather than our deſires: for he knows what is good for us better than we do for ourſelves, and how long it is fit our reſtraints ſhould continue, and deſired mercies ſhould be delayed. We would go out of the ark before the ground is dried; and perhaps if the door be ſhut, are ready to remove the covering, and to climb up ſome other way; but we ſhould be ſatisfied that God's time of ſhewing mercy is certainly the beſt time, when the mercy is ripe for us, and we are ready for it.

Ver. 20—22. Thoſe that have received mercy from God ſhould be forward in returning thanks; and do it *not of conſtraint, but willingly*. God is pleaſed with free-will offerings, and praiſes that wait for him. Noah was now turned out into a cold and deſolate world, where one would have thought his firſt care would have been to build a houſe for himſelf; but, behold, he begins with an altar for God. God is the firſt, and muſt be firſt ſerved; and he begins well that begins with God.

Though Noah's ſtock of cattle was ſo ſmall, and that reſcued from ruin at ſo great an expence of care and pains, yet he did not grudge to give God his dues out it. He might have ſaid, Have I but ſeven ſheep to begin the world with, and muſt one of theſe ſeven be killed and burnt for ſacrifice? were

it not better to defer it, till we have more plenty? No; to prove the ſincerity of his love and gratitude, he chearfully gives the ſeventh to his God, as an acknowledgement that all was his, and owing to him. Serving God with our little is the way to make it more; and we muſt never think that waſted, with which God is honoured.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1—7. God will graciouſly bleſs thoſe, who ſincerely bleſs him, i. e. ſpeak well of him. Thoſe that are truly thankful for the mercies they have received, take the readieſt way to have them confirmed and continued to them.

Wilful murder ought always to be puniſhed with death. It is a ſin *which the Lord would not pardon in a prince*, 2 Kings xxiv. 3, 4. and which therefore a prince ſhould not pardon in a ſubject.

Ver. 8—11. As God looks upon the *bow* that he may remember the covenant, ſo ſhould we, that we alſo may be ever mindful of the covenant, with faith and thankfulneſs.

Ver. 18—23. Though Noah was a great man, and a good man, an old man, and a rich man, a man greatly favoured by heaven, and honoured on earth, yet he would not live an idle life, nor think the huſbandman's calling below him.

Noah drank too liberally, more than his head at this age would bear, for he was *drunk*. We

have reaſon to think he was never drunk before nor after. It was his ſin, and a great ſin; ſo much the worſe for its being ſo ſoon after a great deliverance: but God left him to himſelf, as he did Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. and has left this miſcarriage of his upon record to teach us,

1. That the faireſt copy that ever man wrote ſince the fall, had its blots and falſe ſtrokes.

2. That ſometimes thoſe that with watchfulneſs and reſolution have by the grace of God kept their integrity in the midſt of temptation, have through ſecurity, careleſsneſs, and neglect of the grace of God, been ſurpriſed into ſin, when the hour of temptation hath been over. Noah, that had kept ſober in drunken company, is now drunk in ſober company. *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed, leſt he fall.* Perhaps Ham had ſometimes been himſelf drunk, and reproved for it by his good father, whom he was therefore pleaſed to ſee thus overcome. It is common for thoſe who walk in falſe ways themſelves, to rejoice in the falſe ſteps which they ſometimes ſee others make. But charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, nor can true penitents, that are ſorry for their own ſins, rejoice in the ſins of others.

Ve. 28, 29. Noah lived to ſee two worlds, but being an heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith, when he died, he went to ſee a better than either.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 6—14. Obſerve in Nimrod the nature of *ambition.*

1. It is boundleſs: much would have more, and ſtill cries, *Give, give.*

2. It is reſtleſs: Nimrod, when he had four cities under his command, could not be content till he had four more.

3. It is expenſive: Nimrod will rather be at the charge of *rearing* cities than not have the honour of *ruling* them.

Ver. 15—20. It appears that the poſterity of Canaan was both numerous and rich, and very pleaſantly ſituated; yet Canaan was under a curſe, a divine curſe, and not a cauſeleſs curſe. Note, Thoſe that are under the curſe of God may yet perhaps thrive and proſper greatly in this world; for we cannot *know love or hatred*, the bleſſing or the curſe, *by what is before us*, but by what is within us, Eccleſ. ix. 1.—Canaan here has a better *land* than either Shem or Japheth, and yet they have a better *lot*, for they inherit the bleſſing.

Ver. 21—32. As Ham, though he had many ſons, is diſowned, by being called the *father of Canaan*, on whoſe ſeed the curſe was entailed, chap. ix. 22. ſo Shem, though he had many ſons, is dignified with the title of the *father of Eber*, on whoſe ſeed the bleſſing was entailed. Note, A

family of ſaints is more truly honourable than a family of nobles; Shem's holy ſeed, than Ham's royal ſeed; Jacob's twelve patriarchs, than Iſhmael's twelve princes, Gen. xvii. 20.—Goodneſs is true greatneſs.

CHAP XI.

Ver. 1—4. Inviting accommodations for the preſent, often prove too ſtrong temptations to neglect both duty and intereſt, for hereafter.

Note, 1. Affectation of honour, and a name among men, commonly ſpirits men ſtrangely for great and difficult undertakings, and often betrays them to that which is evil and offenſive to God.

2. It is juſt with God to bury thoſe names in the duſt which are raiſed by ſin. Theſe Babel builders put themſelves to a great deal of fooliſh expence to make them a name; but they could not gain even this point; for we do not find in any hiſtory the name of ſo much as one of them.

Ver. 5—9. Note, Unity is policy, but it is not an infallible mark of the true church: yet while the builders of Babel, though of different families, diſpoſitions and intereſts, were thus unanimous in oppoſing God, what a pity is it, and what a ſhame, that the builders of Sion, though united in one common head and ſpirit, ſhould be divided as they are in ſerving God.

As the confounding of tongues divided the children of men, and ſcattered them abroad; ſo the gift

of tongues beſtowed upon the apoſtles, Acts ii. contributed greatly to the gathering together of the children of God, which were ſcattered abroad; and the uniting them in Chriſt, that with one mind and mouth, they might glorify God, Rom. xv. 16.

Obſerve, 1. That the very thing which they feared came upon them: that diſperſion which they thought to evade by their rebellion, they brought upon themſelves thereby; for that trouble we are moſt likely to fall into, which we ſeek to evade by indirect and ſinful methods.

2. That it was God's work; *the Lord ſcattered them.* God's hand is to be acknowledged in all ſcattering providences. If the family be ſcattered, relations ſcattered, churches ſcattered, it is the Lord's doing.

3. That though they were as firmly in league with one another as could be, yet the Lord ſcattered them; for no man can keep together what God will put aſunder.

Ver. 10—26. Obſerve, That Eber, from whom the Hebrews were denominated, was the longeſt lived of any that were born after the flood; which perhaps was the reward of his ſingular piety, and ſtrict adherence to the ways of God.

Ver. 27—32. Here begins the ſtory of Abram, whoſe name is famous from henceforward in both Teſtaments.

We have here his country, *Ur* of the Chaldees: that was the land of his nativity, an idolatrous coun-

try, where even the children of Eber themſelves were degenerated. Note, Thoſe who are through grace heirs of the Land of Promiſe, ought to remember what was the land of their nativity; what was their corrupt and ſinful ſtate by nature, *the rock out of which they were hewn.*

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1—3. If God love us and have mercy in ſtore for us, he will not ſuffer us to take up our reſt any where ſhort of Canaan; but will graciouſly repeat his calls till the good work begun be performed, and our ſouls repoſe in God only.

Thoſe that *will deal with God muſt deal upon truſt.* We muſt quit the things that are ſeen for the things that are not ſeen; and ſubmit to the ſufferings of this preſent time, in hopes of a glory that is yet to be revealed, Rom. viii. 18. for *it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be*, 1 John iii. 2. no more than it did to Abraham when God called him to a land that he would ſhew him; ſo teaching to live in a continual dependence upon his conduct, and with his eye ever towards him.

In thee ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed.—This was the promiſe that crowned all the reſt; for it points at the Meſſiah, in whom *all the promiſes are yea and amen.*

Note, 1. Jeſus Chriſt is the great bleſſing of the world, the greateſt that ever the world was bleſſed with.

2. It is a great honour to be related to Chriſt. This made Abram's name great, that the Meſſiah was to deſcend from his loins; much more than that he ſhould be the father of many nations. It was Abram's honour to be his father by nature; it will be ours to be his brethren by grace, Matth. xii. 50.

Ver. 4, 5. It is very comfortable when huſband and wife agree to go together in the way to heaven.—Thoſe that ſet out for heaven muſt perſevere to the end, ſtill reaching forth to thoſe things that are before. That which we undertake in obedience to God's command, and a humble attendance upon his providence, will certainly ſucceed, and end with comfort at laſt.

Ver. 6—9. Note, 1. No place or condition of life can ſhut us out from the comfort of God's gracious viſits. Abram is a ſojourner, unſettled, among Canaanites, and yet here alſo he meets with him that *lives and ſees* him. Enemies may part us and our tents, us and our altars; but not us and our God.

Nay, 2. Thoſe that faithfully follow God in a way of duty, though he lead them from their friends, he will himſelf make up that loſs by his gracious appearances to them.

3. God's promiſes are ſure and ſatisfying to all thoſe who conſcientiouſly obſerve and obey his precepts; and thoſe who in compliance with God's call, leave or loſe any thing that is dear to them, ſhall be

ſure of ſomething elſe abundantly better in lieu of it.

4. God reveals himſelf and his favour to his people by degrees. Before he had promiſed to *ſhew* him this land, now to *give* it him. As grace is growing, ſo is comfort.

5. It is comfortable to have land of God's giving, not by providence only, but by promiſe.

6. Mercies to the children are mercies to the parents. I will give it not to thee, but to thy ſeed. It is a grant in reverſion, to his ſeed, which, yet it ſhould ſeem, Abram underſtood alſo as a grant to himſelf of a better land in reverſion, of which this was a type; for he looked for a heavenly country, Heb. xi. 16.

Thoſe that would approve themſelves the children of faithful Abram, and would inherit the bleſſing of Abram muſt make conſcience of keeping up the ſolemn worſhip of God, particularly in their families, according to the example of Abram. The way of family worſhip is a good old way, is no novel invention, but the antient uſage of all the ſaints. Abram was very rich, and had a numerous family, was now unſettled, and in the midſt of enemies; and yet, wherever he pitched his tent, he built an altar. Wherever we go, let us not fail to take our religion along with us.

Ver. 10—13. Note, 1. Strong faith is commonly exerciſed with divers temptations, that it may

be *found to praiſe and honour and glory*, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

2. It pleaſes God ſometimes to try thoſe with great afflictions that are but young beginners in religion.

3. It is poſſible for a man to be in the way of duty, and in the way to happineſs; and yet meet with great troubles and diſappointments.

Here is, a great fault which Abram was guilty of in denying his wife, and pretending that ſhe was his ſiſter. The Scripture is impartial in relating the miſcarriages of the moſt celebrated ſaints; not for our imitation, but our admonition; that *him that thinketh he ſtandeth may take heed leſt he fall.* Note, the fear of man brings a ſnare, and many are driven to ſin by the dread of death, Luke xii. 4, 5.

The grace Abram was moſt eminent for was *faith*; and yet he thus fell through unbelief, and diſtruſt of the Divine Providence, even *after God had appeared to him twice.* Alas! what will become of the willows, when the cedars are thus ſhaken!

Ver. 14—20. God chaſtiſed Pharaoh, and ſo prevented the progreſs of his ſin. Note, Thoſe are happy chaſtiſements that hinder us in a ſinful way, and effectually bring us to our duty, and particularly to the duty of reſtoring that which we have wrongfully taken and detained.

Obſerve, Not Pharoah only, but his houſe was plagued; probably thoſe princes eſpecially that had commended Sarai to him.

Note, Partners in ſin are juſtly made partners in

the puniſhment. Thoſe that ſerve others' luſts, muſt expect to ſhare in their plagues. Pharoah returned Abram his wife without offering any injury to her honour.

Note, God has often raiſed up friends for his people, by making men know it is at their peril if they hurt them.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1—4. True piety will very well conſiſt with great proſperity. Though it is *hard for a rich man* to get to heaven, yet it is not impoſſible, Mark x. 23, 24. Abram was very rich, and yet very religious. Nay, as piety is a friend to outward proſperity, 1 Tim. iv. 8. ſo outward proſperity, if well managed, is an ornament to piety; and an opportunity of doing ſo much the more good.

Abram's altar was gone, ſo that he could not offer ſacrifice, but *he called on the name of the Lord*, as he had done, chap. xii. 8.

Note, 1. All God's people are praying people. You may as ſoon find a living man without breath, as a living Chriſtian without prayer.

2. Thoſe that would approve themſelves upright with their God, muſt be conſtant and perſevering in the ſervices of religion. Abram did not leave his religion behind him in Egypt, as many do in their travels.

3. When we cannot do *what we would*, we muſt

make conſcience of doing *what we can* in the acts of devotion. When we want an altar, let us not be wanting in prayer, but wherever we are, call on the name of the Lord.

Ver. 5—9. We have here an unhappy falling out between Abram and Lot, who had hitherto been inſeparable companions.—1. The occaſion of their quarrel was their riches. Riches are often an occaſion of ſtrife and contention among relations and neighbours.

2. The immediate inſtruments of the quarrel were their ſervants. Bad ſervants often make a great deal of miſchief in families, by their pride and paſſion; their lying, ſlandering, and tale-bearing.

3. The aggravation of the quarrel was, that *the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.* This made the quarrel very ſcandalous. The quarrels of profeſſors are the reproach of profeſſion, and give occaſion, as much as any thing, to the enemies of the Lord to blaſpheme.

4. The making up of this quarrel was very happy. It is beſt to preſerve the peace that it be not broken; but the next beſt is, if differences do happen, with all ſpeed to accommodate them, and quench the fire that has broke out. The motion for ſtaying this ſtrife was made by Abram, though he was the ſenior and ſuperior relation.

1. His petition for peace was very affectionate. *Let there be no ſtrife, I pray thee.* The people of

God ſhould always approve themſelves a peaceable people: whatever others are for, they muſt be for peace.

2. His plea for peace was very cogent. Let there not be a ſtrife *between me and thee.* The conſideration of our relation to each other, as brethren, ſhould always prevail to moderate our paſſions, and either to prevent, or put an end to our contentions. His propoſal for peace was very fair. *Is not the whole land before thee?* Abram gives Lot his choice, and offers to take up with his leavings. *If thou wilt take the left hand I will go to the right.* There was all the reaſon in the world that Abram ſhould chooſe firſt, yet he recedes from his right. Note, it is a noble conqueſt, to be willing to yield for peace ſake. It is the conqueſt of ourſelves, and our own pride and paſſion, Matth. v. 39, 40. It is not only the punctilio of honour, but even intereſt itſelf, that in many caſes muſt be ſacrificed to peace.

Ver. 10—13. Senſual choices are ſinful choices, and ſeldom ſpeed well. Thoſe that in chooſing relations, callings, dwellings, or ſettlements, are guided and governed by the luſts of the fleſh, the luſts of the eye, or the pride of life, and conſult not the intereſts of their ſouls and their religion, cannot expect God's preſence with them, nor his bleſſing upon them; but are commonly diſappointed, even in that which they principally aimed at, and miſs of that which they promiſed themſelves ſatisfaction in.

It has often been the vexatious lot of good men

to live among wicked neighbours, to *ſojourn in Meſech*, Pſalm cxx. 5. and it cannot but be the more grievous, if, as Lot here, they have brought it upon themſelves by an unadviſed choice.

Ver. 14—18. We have here an account of a gracious viſit which God made to Abram, to confirm the promiſe to him and his. Obſerve when it was that God renewed and ratified the promiſe—*after that Lot was ſeparated from him*; that is,

1. After the quarrel was over; for thoſe are beſt prepared for the viſits of divine grace, whoſe ſpirits are calm and ſedate, and not ruffled with any paſſion.

2. After Abram's humble, ſelf-denying, condeſcentions to Lot, for the preſervation of peace, God came to him with this token of his favour. Note, God will abundantly make up in ſpiritual peace, what we loſe for the preſerving of neighbourly peace.

3. After he had loſt the comfortable ſociety of his kinſman, by whoſe departure his hands were weakened, and his heart ſaddened; then God came to him with theſe good and comfortable words.—Note, Communion with God may, at any time, ſerve to make up the want of converſation with our friends. When our relations are ſeparated from us, yet God is not.

4. After Lot had choſen that pleaſant, fruitful vale, and was gone to take poſſeſſion of it, leſt Abram ſhould be tempted to envy him, and to re-

pent that he had given him the choice, God comes to him and aſſures him, that what he had ſhould remain to him and *his heirs for ever*; ſo that though Lot perhaps had the better *land*, yet Abram had the better *title*. Lot had the paradiſe, ſuch as it was, but Abram had the promiſe; and the event ſoon made it appear, that however it ſeemed now, Abram had really the better part. See Job xxii. 20.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1—12. We have here an account of the firſt war mentioned in ſcripture, which (though the wars of the nations make the greateſt figure in hiſtory) we had not heard of, if Abraham and Lot had not been concerned in it. Note, Pride, covetouſneſs, and ambition, are the luſts from which wars and fightings come. To thoſe inſatiable idols the blood of thouſands has been ſacrificed.

Concerning this war we may obſerve, all the goods of Sodom, and particularly their ſtores, and proviſions of victuals, were carried off by the conquerors. Note, When men abuſe the gifts of a bountiful providence to gluttony and exceſs, it is juſt with God, and his uſual way, by ſome judgement or other, to ſtrip them of that which they have ſo abuſed, Hoſ. ii. 8, 9.

Lot was carried captive. They took Lot among the reſt, and his goods. Now Lot may be here conſidered, as ſmarting for the fooliſh choice he

made of a ſettlement here. This is plainly intimated, when it is ſaid, they took Abram's brother's ſon, who dwelt in Sodom. So near a relation of Abram ſhould have been a companion and diſciple of Abram, and ſhould have abode by his tents; but if he choſe to dwell in Sodom, he muſt thank himſelf if he ſhared in Sodom's calamities. Note, When we go out of the way of our duty, we put ourſelves from under God's protection, and cannot expect that the choices which are made by our luſts, ſhould iſſue to our comfort. Particular mention is made of their taking Lot's goods, thoſe goods which had occaſioned his conteſt with Abram, and his ſeparation from him. Note, It is juſt with God to deprive us of thoſe enjoyments, by which we have ſuffered ourſelves to be deprived of our enjoyment of *him*.

Ver. 13—16. We have here an account of the only military action we ever find Abram engaged in; and this he was not prompted to by his avarice or ambition, but purely by a principle of charity: it was not to enrich himſelf, but to help his friend.

Abram's ſucceſs in this expedition was very conſiderable: he defeated his enemies, reſcued his friends, and we do not find that he ſuſtained any loſs. Note, Thoſe that venture in a good cauſe, with a good heart, are under the ſpecial protection of a good God, and have reaſon to hope for a good iſſue.

1. He reſcued his kinſman. Twice here he is called his brother Lot. The remembrance of their

relation, both by nature and grace, made him forget the little quarrel that had been between them, in which Lot had by no means carried himſelf well towards Abram. Note, We ought to be ready, whenever it is in the power of our hands, to ſuccour and relieve thoſe that are in diſtreſs, eſpecially our relations and friends. *A brother is born for adverſity*, Prov. xvii. 17. A friend in need is a friend indeed.

Though others have been wanting in their duty to us, yet we muſt not therefore deny our duty to them.

2. He reſcued the reſt of the captives for Lot's ſake. Note, As we have opportunity, we muſt *do good to all men.*

Ver. 21—24. The people of God muſt, for their credit's ſake, take heed of doing any thing that looks mean or mercenary, or that ſavours of covetouſneſs and ſelf-ſeeking.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. Note, Where there is great faith yet there may be many fears, 2 Cor. vii. 5.

2. God takes cognizance of his people's fears, though never ſo ſecret, and *knows their ſouls*, Pſalm xxxi. 7.

3. It is the will of God that his people ſhould not give way to prevailing fears, whatever happens. Let the ſinners in Sion be afraid, but fear not, Abram.

The conſideration of this, that God himſelf is, and will be, a ſhield to his people to ſecure them from all deſtructive evils, and a ſhield ready to them, and a ſhield round about them, ſhould be ſufficient to ſilence all their perplexing, tormenting fears.

Ver. 2—6. Though we muſt never complain *of* God, yet we have leave to complain *to* him, and to be large and particular in the remonſtrance of our grievances; and it is ſome eaſe to a burdened ſpirit to open its caſe to a faithful and compaſſionate friend: ſuch a friend God is, whoſe ear is always open.

Thoſe who would have the comfort of the promiſes, muſt mix faith with them.

Ver. 7—11. It is a very deſirable thing to *know that we ſhall inherit the heavenly Canaan*, that is, to be confirmed in our belief of the truth of that happineſs, and to have the evidences of our title to it more and more cleared up to us.

Thoſe that would receive the aſſurances of God's favour, and would have their faith confirmed, muſt attend inſtituted ordinances, and expect to meet with God in them.

A very watchful eye muſt be kept upon our ſpiritual ſacrifices, that nothing be ſuffered to prey upon them, and render them unfit for God's acceptance.

Ver. 12—16. The children of light do not

always walk in the light, but ſometimes clouds and darkneſs are round about them.

Note, 1. The meaſure of ſin fills gradually: thoſe that continue impenitent in wicked ways, are *treaſuring up unto themſelves wrath.*

2. Some people's meaſure of ſin fills ſlowly. The Sodomites that were *ſinners before the Lord exceedingly*, ſoon filled their meaſure: ſo did the Jews that were in profeſſion near to God, but the iniquity of the Amorites was long in filling up.

3. This is the reaſon of the proſperity of wicked people: the meaſure of their ſins is not yet full.

Good men are ſometimes greatly favoured by being *taken away from the evil to come*, Iſa. lvii. 1.

Note, 1. Even the friends and favourites of heaven are not exempted from the ſtroke of death. *Are we greater than our father Abram, which is dead?* John viii 53.

2. Good men die willingly. They are not fetched, they are not forced, but they go. Their ſoul is not required as was the rich man's, Luke xii. 20. but chearfully reſigned. They would not live always.

3. At death we go to our fathers, to all our fathers that are gone before us to the ſtate of the dead, Job xxi. 33. To our *godly* fathers that are gone before us to the ſtate of the bleſſed, Heb. xii. 23.

4. Whenever a godly man dies, he dies in peace. If the way be piety, the end is peace, Pſalm xxxvii. 37.

Ver. 17—21. God's promiſes are God's gifts and are ſo to be accounted of.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1—3. We have here the marriage of Abram to Hagar, who was his ſecondary wife. Herein, though he may be excuſed, he cannot be juſtified, for *from the beginning it was not ſo:* and when it was ſo, it ſeems to have proceeded from an irregular deſire to build up their families for the ſpeedier peopling of the world, and the church.

Now, the maker of this match (would one think it?) was Sarai herſelf: ſhe ſaid to Abram, *I pray thee go in unto my maid.* It is the policy of Satan, to tempt us by our neareſt and deareſt relations, or thoſe friends that we have an opinion of, and an affection for. The temptation is moſt dangerous, when it is ſent by a hand that is leaſt ſuſpected. It is our wiſdom therefore to conſider, not ſo much who ſpeaks, as what is ſpoken.

God's commands conſult our own comfort and honour, much better than our own contrivances do. It had been much more for Sarai's intereſt, that Abram ſhould have kept to the rule of God's law, than that he ſhould be guided by her fooliſh projects. When our hearts are too much ſet upon any creature comfort, we are eaſily put upon the uſe of indirect methods for the obtaining it. Inordinate deſires commonly produce irregular endeavours. If

our wiſhes be not kept in a ſubmiſſion to God's providence, our purſuits will ſcarce be kept under the reſtraints of his precepts.

It is for want of a firm dependance upon God's promiſe, and a patient waiting God's time, that we go out of the way of our duty to catch at expected mercy. *He that believes doth not make haſte.*

Ver. 4—6. We have here the immediate ill conſequences of Abram's unhappy marriage to Hagar. A deal of miſchief it made preſently. When we do not well, both ſin and trouble lie at the door; and we may thank ourſelves for the guilt and grief that follows us, when we go out of the way of our duty.

Mean and ſervile ſpirits, when favoured and advanced, either by God or man, are apt to grow haughty and inſolent, and to forget their place and original. It is a hard thing to bear honour aright. We juſtly ſuffer by thoſe whom we have ſinfully indulged; and it is a righteous thing with God to make thoſe inſtruments of our trouble, whom we have made inſtruments of our ſin. It is an abſurdity which paſſionate people are often guilty of, to quarrel with others, for that which they themſelves muſt bear the blame of. Sarai could not but own that ſhe had given her maid to Abram, and yet ſhe cries out, *My wrong be upon thee*, when ſhe ſhould have ſaid, *What a fool was I to do ſo!* That is never ſaid wiſely, which pride and anger have the inditing of. When paſſion is upon the throne, reaſon is out of

doors, and is neither heard nor ſpoken. Thoſe are not always in the right that are moſt loud and forward in appealing to God. Raſh and bold imprecations are commonly evidences of guilt and a bad cauſe.

Ver. 7—9. It is a great mercy to be ſtopped in a ſinful way, either by conſcience or providence.

God ſuffers thoſe that are out of the way to wander awhile, that when they ſee their folly, and what a loſs they have brought themſelves to, they may be the better diſpoſed to return.

Children and ſervants muſt be treated with mildneſs and gentleneſs, leſt we provoke them to take any irregular courſes, and ſo become acceſſary to their ſin; which will condemn us, though it will not juſtify them.

Thoſe that are gone away from their place and duty, when they are convinced of their error, muſt haſten their return and reformation, how mortifying ſo ever it may be.

Ver. 10—14. Thoſe that have turbulent ſpirits have commonly troubleſome lives. They that are provoking, vexatious, and injurious to others, muſt expect to be repaid in their own coin. He that has his hand and tongue againſt every man, ſhall have every man's hand and tongue againſt him, and has no reaſon to complain of it.

The God with whom we have to do is a ſeeing God, an all-ſeeing God. *God is*, as the antients expreſſed it, *all eye*. We ought to acknowledge this

with application to ourſelves. He that ſees all ſees me, as David, Pſalm cxxxix. 1. *O God thou haſt ſearched me, and known me.* A believing regard to God as a God that ſees us, will be of great uſe to us in our returns to him.

He that is all-ſeeing is ever living: he lives and ſees us.

Thoſe that are graciouſly admitted into communion with God, and receive ſeaſonable comforts from him, ſhould tell others what he has done for their ſouls, that they alſo may be encouraged to ſeek him, and truſt in him.

God's gracious manifeſtations of himſelf to us are to be had in everlaſting remembrance by us, and ſhould never be forgotten.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1—3. God graciouſly condeſcends to talk with thoſe whom he takes into his covenant and communion with himſelf. *He talks with them by his word*, Prov. vi. 22. talks with them by his Spirit, John xiv. 26. This honour have all his ſaints.

Thoſe that are admitted into fellowſhip with God are, and muſt be, very humble and very reverent in their approaches to him. If we ſay we have fellowſhip with him, and the familiarity breeds contempt, we deceive ourſelves. Thoſe that would receive comfort from God, muſt ſet them-

ſelves to give glory to God, and to worſhip at his footſtool.

Ver. 4—6. It is promiſed to Abram, that he ſhould be a father of many nations, *i. e.*

1. That his ſeed, after the fleſh, ſhould be very numerous, both in Iſaac and in Iſhmael, and in the ſons of Keturah.

2. That all believers in every age ſhould be looked upon as his ſpiritual ſeed, and he ſhould be called not only the friend of God, but the father of the faithful. In token of this, his name was changed from *Abram*, a high father, to *Abraham*, the father of a multitude.

Ver. 7—14. As the land of Canaan was ſecured to the ſeed of Abraham, according to the fleſh: ſo Heaven is ſecured to all his ſpiritual ſeed, by a covenant, and for a poſſeſſion truly everlaſting.

Ver. 15—22. Here is, 1. The promiſe made to Abraham of a ſon by Sarai, that ſon in whom the promiſe made to him ſhould be fulfilled, that he ſhould be the father of many nations, for ſhe alſo ſhall be a mother of nations, and kings of people ſhall be of her.

Note, God reveals his purpoſes of good-will to his people by degrees. God had told Abraham long before, that he ſhould have a ſon, but never till now that he ſhould have a ſon by Sarai.

2. The ratification of this promiſe was, the change of *Sarai*'s name into *Sarah*. The ſame letter added to her name, that was to Abraham's, and for the

ſame reaſons. *Sarai* ſignifies *my princeſs*, as if her honour were confined to one family only: *Sarah* ſignifies *a princeſs*, viz. of multitudes; or ſignifying that from her ſhould come the Meſſiah, the prince, even the prince of the kings of the earth.

3. Abraham's joyful, thankful, entertainment of this gracious promiſe. Upon this occaſion he expreſſed great humility, great joy, great admiration.

4. Abraham's prayer for Iſhmael. *O that Iſhmael might live before thee!*

Note, 1. Though we ought not to preſcribe to God, yet he gives us leave in prayer to be humbly free with him, and particularly in making known our requeſts, Phil. iv. 6. Whatever is the matter of our care and fear ſhould be ſpread before God in prayer.

2. That it is the duty of parents to pray for their children, for all their children, as Job who offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all, Job i. 5. Abraham would not have it thought that when God promiſed him a ſon by Sarah, which he ſo much deſired, that then his ſon by Hagar was forgotten: no; ſtill he bears him upon his heart, and ſhews a concern for him. The proſpect of *further* favours muſt not make us unmindful of *former* favours.

3. That the great thing we ſhould deſire of God for our children is, that they may live before him. Spiritual bleſſings are the beſt bleſſings, and which we ſhould be moſt earneſt with God for, both for ourſelves and others. Thoſe live well that live before God.

Abraham names his child, by Sarah, *Iſaac*, laughter, becauſe he rejoiced in ſpirit when this ſon was promiſed him. Note, If God's promiſes be our joy, his mercies promiſed ſhall in due time be our *exceeding* joy. Chriſt will be laughter to them that look for him. They that now rejoice in hope, ſhall ſhortly rejoice in having that which they hope for. This is laughter that is *not* mad.]

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1—8. Where, upon a prudent and impartial judgment, we ſee no cauſe to ſuſpect ill, charity teacheth us to hope well, and to ſhew kindneſs accordingly. It is better to feed five drones, or waſps, than ſtarve one bee.

Religion doth not deſtroy but improve good manners, and teaches us to honour all men. Decent civility is a great ornament to piety.

Ver. 9—15. *Sarah laughed within herſelf.* It was not a pleaſing laughter of faith, like Abraham's, chap. xvii. 17. but it was a laughter of doubting and miſtruſt. Note, The ſame thing may be done from very different principles, which God only can judge of, who knows the heart.

Obſerve, Though Sarah was now moſt kindly and generouſly entertaining theſe angels, yet when ſhe did amiſs they reproved her for it, as Chriſt reproved Martha in her own houſe, Luke x. 40, 41.

If our friends be kind to us, we muſt not therefore be ſo unkind to them, as to ſuffer ſin upon them.

Ver. 16—22. Thoſe that by faith live a life of communion with God, cannot but know more of his mind than other people, though not with a prophetical, yet with a prudential practical knowledge.

Thoſe that expect family bleſſings, muſt make conſcience of family duty.

Ver. 23—33. Communion with God is kept up by the word and prayer. In the word God ſpeaks to us, in prayer we ſpeak to him. God had ſpoken to Abraham his purpoſes concerning Sodom, now from thence Abraham takes occaſion to ſpeak to God on Sodom's behalf. Note, God's word doth us good when it furniſhes us with matter for prayer, and excites us to it.

When we addreſs ourſelves to the duty of prayer, we ought to remember that we are drawing near to God, that we may be filled with a reverence of him, Lev. x. 3.

Though ſin is to be hated, ſinners are to be pitied and prayed for. Note, 1. The righteous are mingled with the wicked in this world. Among the beſt there are commonly ſome bad, and among the worſt ſome good. Even in Sodom, one Lot.

2. Though the righteous be among the wicked, yet the righteous God certainly will not *deſtroy the righteous with the wicked.* Though in this world they may be involved in the ſame common calamities, yet in the great day a diſtinction will be made.

Though they may ſuffer *with* them, yet they do not ſuffer *like* them. Common calamities are quite another thing to the righteous, than what they are to the wicked, Iſa. xxvii. 7. See what great bleſſings good people are to any place, and how little thoſe befriend themſelves that hate and perſecute them.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1—3. There was but one good man in Sodom, and theſe heavenly meſſengers ſoon found him out. Wherever we are, we ſhould enquire out thoſe that live in the fear of God, and chooſe to aſſociate ourſelves with them: Matth. x. 11. *Enquire who is worthy, and there abide.*

Thoſe that live in bad places, ſhould know how to value the ſociety of thoſe that are wiſe and good, and earneſtly deſire it.

Ver. 4—11. Of two evils we muſt chooſe the leſs; but of two ſins we muſt chooſe neither, nor ever *do evil that good may come* of it.

Angels are employed for the ſpecial preſervation of thoſe that expoſe themſelves to danger by well-doing. The ſaints, at death, are pulled, like Lot, into a houſe of perfect ſafety, and the door ſhut for ever againſt thoſe that purſue them.

Ver. 12—14. The holy angels are miniſters of God's wrath for the deſtruction of ſinners, as well as of his mercy, for the preſervation and deliver-

ance of his people. Thoſe who, through grace, are themſelves delivered out of a ſinful ſtate and condition, ſhould do what they can for the deliverance of others, eſpecially their relations.

Bad people often fare the better in this world for the ſake of their good relations. It is good to be of kin to a godly man.

Ver. 15—23. Obſerve, With what a gracious violence Lot was brought out of Sodom.

Note, 1. The ſalvation of the moſt righteous men muſt be attributed to God's mercy, not to their own merit. We are *ſaved by grace*.

2. God's power alſo muſt be acknowledged in the bringing ſouls out of a ſinful ſtate. If God had not brought us forth we had never come forth.

3. If God had not been merciful to us, our lingering had been our ruin.

Ver. 24, 25. They that went after ſtrange fleſh were deſtroyed by ſtrange fire, Jude vii.

Ver. 26. This pillar of ſalt ſhould ſeaſon us. Since it is ſuch a dangerous thing to look back, let us always preſs forwards, Phil. iii. 13, 14.

Ver. 30—38. Lot, that awhile ago could not find room enough for himſelf and his ſtock in the whole land, but muſt juſtle with Abraham, and get as far from him as he could, is now confined to a hole in a hill, where he has ſcarce room to turn him, and there is ſolitary and trembling. Note, It is juſt with God to reduce thoſe to poverty and reſtraint, who have abuſed their liberty and plenty.

Lot, that not only kept himſelf ſober and chaſte in Sodom, but was a conſtant mourner for the wickedneſs of the place, and a witneſs againſt it; yet in the mountain, where he was alone, and as he thought, quite out of the way of temptation, he is thus ſhamefully overtaken. *Let him* therefore *that thinks he ſtands*, ſtands high, and ſtands firm, *take heed leſt he fall.*

Obſerve, That after this, we never read any more of Lot; nor what came of him. No doubt he repented of his ſin and was pardoned; but from the ſilence of the ſcripture concerning him, from henceforward, we may learn, that drunkenneſs, as it makes men forgetful, ſo it makes them forgotten; and many a name, which otherwiſe might have been remembered with reſpect, is buried by it in contempt and oblivion.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1, 2. Abraham had been guilty of this ſame ſin before, chap. xii. 13. and had been reproved for it, and convinced of the folly of the ſuggeſtion, which induced him to it, yet he returns to it.

Note, It is poſſible that a good man may not only fall into ſin, but relapſe into the ſame ſin, through the ſurprize and ſtrength of temptation, and the infirmity of the fleſh.

Abraham by his ſin, in denying his wife, brought

Sarah into peril. *The king of Gerar ſent and took her* to his houſe, in order to the taking her to his bed.

Note, The ſin of one often occaſions the ſin of others. He that breaks the hedge of God's commandments, opens a gap to he knows not how many. The beginning of ſin is, as the letting forth of water.

Ver. 3—7. It is matter of comfort to thoſe that are honeſt, that God knows their honeſty, and will acknowledge it; though perhaps men that are prejudiced againſt them, either cannot be convinced of it, or will not own it.

Ignorance will excuſe no longer than it continues. If we ignorantly did wrong, that will not excuſe us if we knowingly perſiſt in it, Lev. v. 3, 4.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1—8. God is always punctual to his time. Though his promiſed mercies come not at the time that we ſet, they will certainly come at the time that he ſets, and that is the beſt time.

Abraham made this feaſt, not on the day that Iſaac was born, that would have been too great a diſturbance to Sarah; nor the day he was circumciſed, that would have been too great a diverſion from the ordinance; but the day he was weaned, becauſe God's bleſſing upon the nurſing of children, and the preſervation of them through the perils of

the infant age, is a ſignal inſtance of the care and tenderneſs of the Divine Providence, which ought to be acknowledged to his praiſe. See Pſalm xxii. 9, 10. Hoſ. xi. 1, 2.

Ver. 14—21. We are apt to forget former promiſes, when preſent providences ſeem to contradict them.

Many that have reaſon enough to be comforted, go mourning from day to day, becauſe they do not ſee the reaſon they have for comfort. There is a well of water by them in the covenant of grace, but they are not aware of it, they have not the benefit of it, till the ſame God that opened their eyes to ſee their wound, opens them to ſee their remedy, John xvi. 6, 7.

Ver. 22—32. God in his providence ſometimes ſhews his people ſuch tokens for good, that their neighbours cannot but take notice of it, Pſalm lxxxvi. 17. Their affairs do ſo viſibly proſper, and they have ſuch remarkable ſucceſs in their undertakings, that a confeſſion is extorted from all about them, of God's preſence with them.

Ver. 33, 34. Abraham kept up public worſhip, to which probably his neighbours reſorted, and joined with him.

Note, Good men ſhould not only retain their goodneſs wherever they go, but do all they can to propagate it, and make others good.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1, 2. Strong faith is often exerciſed with ſtrong trials, and put upon hard ſervices.

Ver. 3—10. God's commands muſt not be diſputed but obeyed. We muſt not conſult *with fleſh and blood* about them, Gal. i. 15, 16. but with a gracious obſtinacy perſiſt in our obedience to them. It is our wiſdom and duty, when we are going to worſhip God, to lay aſide all thoſe thoughts and cares which may divert us from the ſervice; leave them at the bottom of the hill, that we may attend on the Lord without diſtraction.

Here is an act of faith and obedience, which deſerves to be a ſpectacle to God, angels and men. Abraham's darling, Sarah's laughter, the church's hope, the heir of promiſe, is ready to bleed and die by his own father's hand, who never ſhrinks at the doing of it. Now this obedience of Abraham in offering up Iſaac, is a lively repreſentation,

1. Of the love of God to us, in delivering up his only begotten Son to ſuffer and die for us, as a ſacrifice. It pleaſed the Lord himſelf to bruiſe him. See Zech. xiii. 7. Abraham was obliged both in duty and gratitude to part with Iſaac, and parted with him to a friend; but God was under no obligations to us, for we were enemies.

2. Of our duty to God in return of that love.

We muſt tread in the ſteps of this faith of Abraham. God, by his word, calls us to part with all for Chriſt, all our ſins, though they have been as a right hand or a right eye, or an Iſaac; all thoſe things that are competitors and rivals with Chriſt for the ſovereignty of the heart, Luke xiv. 26. and we muſt cheerfully let them all go.

God by his providence, which is truly the voice of God, calls us to part with an Iſaac ſometimes, and we muſt do it by a cheerful reſignation and ſubmiſſion to his holy will, 1 Sam. iii. 18.

Ver. 11—14. Our creature-comforts are then moſt likely to be continued, when we are moſt willing to reſign them up to God's will.

God's time to help and relieve his people is, when they are brought to the greateſt extremity. The more imminent the danger is, and the nearer to be put in execution, the more wonderful, and the more welcome is the deliverance.

The beſt evidence of our fearing God, is our being willing to ſerve and honour him with that which is deareſt to us, and to part with all *to* him, or *for* him.

A new name was given to the place, to the honour of God, and for the encouragement of all believers to the end of the world, cheerfully to truſt God in the way of obedience: Jehovah jireh, *The Lord will provide.*

It was not owing to any contrivance of Abraham, nor was it in anſwer to his prayer, though he was

a famous interceſſor; but it was purely the Lord's doing.—Let it be recorded for generations to come,

1. That *the Lord will ſee*; he will always have his eye upon his people in their ſtraits and diſtreſſes, that he may come in with ſeaſonable ſuccour in the critical juncture.

2. That he will *be ſeen*, be ſeen *in the mount*, in the greateſt perplexities of his people. He will not only *manifeſt* but *magnify* his wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, in that deliverance. Where God *ſees* and *provides*, he ſhould be *ſeen* and *praiſed*.

Ver. 15—19. Extraordinary ſervices ſhall be crowned with honours and comforts extraordinary; and favours in the promiſe, though not yet performed, ought to be accounted real and valuable recompences.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1, 2. It is not only lawful, but our duty, to lament the death of our near relations, both in compliance with the providence of God, who thus calls to weeping and mourning, and in honour to thoſe to whom honour is due. Tears are a tribute due to our deceaſed friends: but we muſt not ſorrow as thoſe that have no hope, for we have a good hope through grace, both concerning them, and concerning ourſelves.

Ver. 3—15. The death of our relations ſhould effectually remind us that we are not at home in this world.

Death will make thoſe unpleaſant to our ſight, who while they lived were the deſire of our eyes.

A moderate deſire to obtain that which is convenient for us by fair and honeſt means, is not ſuch a coveting that which is our neighbour's, as is forbidden in the tenth commandment.

Honeſty as well as honour forbid us to ſpunge upon our neighbours, and to impoſe upon thoſe that are free.

No little thing ſhould break ſquares between true friends. When we are tempted to be *hot* in reſenting affronts, *high* in demanding our rights, or *hard* in denying a kindneſs, we ſhould anſwer the temptation with this queſtion, What is that between me and my friend?

Ver. 16—20. Prudence as well as juſtice directs us to be fair and open in our dealings. Fraudulent contracts hate the light, and chuſe to be clandeſtine; but they that deſign honeſtly in their bargains care not who witneſs them. As that which is bought muſt be honeſtly paid for, ſo that which is ſold muſt be honeſtly delivered and ſecured.

It is worth noting,

1. That a burying place was the firſt ſpot of ground Abraham was poſſeſſed of in Canaan.—When we are entering into the world, it is good to think of our going out of it; for as ſoon as we are born we begin to die.

2. That it was the only piece of land he was

ever poſſeſſed of, though it was all his own in reverſion.

Thoſe that have leaſt of this earth find a grave in it.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1—9. Parents in diſpoſing of their children ſhould carefully conſult the welfare of their ſouls, and their furtherance in the way to heaven.

Note, 1. Thoſe that carefully keep in the way of duty, and govern themſelves by the principles of religion in their deſigns and undertakings, have good reaſon to expect proſperity and ſucceſs in them. God will iſſue that to our comfort, in which we ſincerely aim at his glory.

2. God's promiſes and our own experiences, are ſufficient to encourage our dependance upon God, and our expectations from him, in all the affairs of this life.

3. God's angels are miniſtering ſpirits, ſent forth, not only for the protection, but guidance of the heirs of promiſe, Heb. i. 14. *He ſhall ſend his angel before thee*, and then thou wilt ſpeed well.

Ver. 10—28. A good ſervant that makes conſcience of the duty of his place, and doth it in the fear of God, though he make not a figure in the world, nor have praiſe of men, yet ſhall be owned and accepted of God, and have praiſe of him.

We have leave to be particular in recommending

our affairs to the conduct and care of the Divine Providence.

Thoſe that would have good ſpeed, muſt pray for it this day, in this affair: thus we muſt *in all our ways acknowledge God*, Prov. iii. 6. And if we thus look up to God in every undertaking, we ſhall have the comfort of having done our duty, whatever the iſſue be.

Note, 1. It is the comfort, as well as the belief, of a good man, that God's providence extends itſelf to the ſmalleſt occurrences, and admirably ſerves its own purpoſes by them.

2. It is our wiſdom in all our affairs to follow providence, and folly to force it.

3. It is very deſirable, and that which we may lawfully pray for, while in the general we ſet God's will before us as our rule, that he will, by hints of providence, direct us in the way of our duty, and give us indications what his mind is.

Providence ſometimes wonderfully directs thoſe that by faith and prayer ſeek direction from heaven, in the choice of ſuitable yoke-fellows. Happy marriages thoſe are likely to be, that are made in the fear of God, and thoſe we are ſure are *made in heaven*. What we win by prayer we muſt wear with praiſe: for mercies in anſwer to prayer are in a particular manner obligatory.

In doubtful caſes, it is very comfortable to ſee God leading us, as he led Iſrael in the Wilderneſs, by the pillar of the cloud and fire.

Ver. 29—53. Thoſe that are *bleſſed of God*, ſhould be welcome to us. It is good owning thoſe whom God owns.

The doing of our work, and the fulfilling of our truſts, either for God or man, ſhould be preferred by us before *our neceſſary food.*

God's way is always the *right way*, Pſalm cvii. 7. and thoſe are well led whom he leads.

Thoſe who deal fairly have reaſon to expect fair dealing.

Ver. 54—61. As children ought not to marry without their parents' conſent, ſo parents ought not to marry them without their own.

When our relations are entering into a new condition, we ought by prayer to recommend them to the bleſſing and grace of God.

Ver. 62—67. Note, 1. Holy ſouls love retirement. It will do us good to be often left alone, walking alone, and ſitting alone; and, if we have the art of improving ſolitude, we ſhall find we are never leſs alone than when alone.

2. Meditation and prayer ought to be both our buſineſs and delight, when we are alone. While we have a God, a Chriſt, and a heaven, to acquaint ourſelves with, we need not want matter either for meditation or prayer, which, if they go together, will mutually befriend each other.

3. Our walks in the field are truly pleaſant, when we apply ourſelves to meditation and prayer. We there have a free and open proſpect of the hea-

vens above us, and the earth around us, and the hoſt and riches of both; by the view of which we ſhould be led to the contemplation of the Maker and Owner of all.

4. The exerciſes of devotion ſhould be the refreſhment and entertainment of the evening, after the care and buſineſs of the day, to relieve the fatigue of it; and before the repoſe and ſleep of the night, to prepare us for that.

5. Merciful providences are then doubly comfortable, when they find us well employed, and in the way of our duty.

Obſerve, 1. What an affectionate ſon Iſaac was to his mother. It was about three years ſince her death, and yet he was not till now comforted concerning it. The wound which that affliction gave to his tender ſpirit bled ſo long, and was never healed till God brought him into this new relation. Thus croſſes and comforts are balances to each other, Eccl. vii. 14. and help to keep the ſcale even.

2. What an affectionate huſband he was to his wife.

Note, Thoſe that have approved themſelves well in one relation, it may be hoped will do ſo in another.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 19—28. Though the accompliſhment of God's promiſe is always ſure, yet it is often ſlow, and ſeems to be croſſed and contradicted by Providence, that the faith of believers may be tried, their patience exerciſed, and that mercies long waited for may be the more welcome when they come.

This ſtruggle between Jacob and Eſau in the womb, repreſents the ſtruggle that is between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan,

1. In the world. The ſeed of the woman and the ſeed of the ſerpent, have been contending ever ſince the enmity was put between them, Gen. iii, 15. and it has occaſioned a conſtant uneaſineſs among men.

2. In the hearts of believers. No ſooner is Chriſt formed in the ſoul, but preſently there begins a conflict between the fleſh and ſpirit, Gal. v. 17. The ſtream is not turned without a mighty ſtruggle, which yet ought not to diſcourage us. It is better to have a conflict with ſin, than a tame ſubmiſſion to it.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 1—5. The intrinſic worth of God's promiſes cannot be leſſened in a believer's eye by any croſs providences.

As we may go any whither with comfort when God's bleſſing goes with us, ſo we may ſtay any where contentedly, if that bleſſing reſt upon us. Thoſe that muſt live by faith, have need often to review and repeat to themſelves the promiſes they are to live upon, eſpecially when they are called to any inſtance of ſuffering or ſelf-denial.

Ver. 6—11. We ſee, 1. That very good men have ſometimes been guilty of very great faults and follies. Let thoſe therefore that ſtand take heed leſt they fall, and thoſe that are fallen not deſpair of being helped up again. And,

2. That there is an aptneſs in us to imitate even the weakneſſes and infirmities of thoſe we have a value for: we have need therefore to keep our foot, leſt while we aim to tread in the ſteps of good men, we ſometimes tread in their by-ſteps.

Ver. 12—25. We ſhould deny ourſelves both in our rights and in our conveniences, rather than quarrel. A wiſe and good man will rather retire into obſcurity, like Iſaac here into a valley, than ſit high to be the butt of envy and ill will.

Thoſe that follow peace, ſooner or later, ſhall find peace. Thoſe that ſtudy to be quiet ſeldom fail of being ſo. When men are found falſe and unkind, we may comfort ourſelves that God is faithful and gracious; and his time to ſhew himſelf ſo, is when we are moſt diſappointed in our expectations from men.

Thoſe may remove with comfort that are ſure of God's preſence with them wherever they go.

Ver. 26—33. Thoſe whom God bleſſes and favours have reaſon enough to forgive thoſe that hate them, ſince the worſt enemy they have cannot do them any real hurt. Religion teaches us to be neighbourly, and as much as in us lies, to *live peaceably with all men.*

Ver. 34, 35. 1. It grieved Iſaac and Rebekah, that Eſau married without aſking, or at leaſt without taking, their advice and conſent: ſee whoſe ſteps thoſe children tread in, who either contemn or contradict their parents in diſpoſing of themſelves.

2. It grieved them that he married to thoſe who had no religion among them, for Eſau knew what was his father's care and mind concerning him, that he ſhould by no means marry a Canaanite.

3. It ſhould ſeem, the wives he married were provoking in their carriage towards Iſaac and Rebecca. Thoſe children have little reaſon to expect the bleſſing of God, who do that which is a grief of mind to their good parents.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1—5. We are very apt to take our meaſures rather from our reaſon than from divine revelation, and thereby often miſs our way. We think the wiſe and learned, the mighty and noble, ſhould

inherit the promiſe, but God ſees not as man ſees: ſee 1 Sam. xvi. 6, 7. Old people ſhould be minded by the growing infirmities of age to do quickly, and with all the little might they have, what their hand finds to do: ſee Joſhua xiii. 1.

The work of life muſt be done before we die, for it cannot be done after, Eccl. ix. 10. and it is very deſirable when we come to die, to have nothing elſe to do but to die. Iſaac lived above forty years after this: let none therefore think that they ſhall die the ſooner, for making their wills and getting ready for death.

Ver. 18—29. Obſerve here, The art and aſſurance with which Jacob managed this intrigue. Who would have thought that this plain man could have played his part ſo well in a deſign of this nature? His mother having put him in the way of it, and encouraged him in it, he dexterouſly applies himſelf to thoſe methods which he had never accuſtomed himſelf to, but had always conceived an abhorrence of.

Note, Lying is ſoon learned. Is this Jacob? Is this Iſrael indeed without guile? It is certainly written not for our intimation, but our admonition. Good men have ſometimes failed in the exerciſe of thoſe graces which they have been moſt eminent for.

Ver. 41—46. Note, 1. Thoſe are ill children to whom their good parents are a burden, and who upon any account long for the days of mourning for them.

2. Bad men are long held in by external reſtraints from doing the miſchief they would do, and ſo their wicked purpoſes come to nought.

3. Thoſe who think to defeat God's purpoſes, will undoubtedly be diſappointed themſelves. Eſau aimed to prevent Jacob, or his ſeed, from having the dominion, by taking away his life before he was married; but who can diſannul what God has ſpoken? Men may fret at God's counſels, but cannot change them.

Obſerve, Though Jacob was himſelf well fixed in his religion, yet he has need to be put out of the way of temptation. Even *he* was in danger both of following the ill example of his brother, and of being drawn into a ſnare by it. We muſt not preſume too far upon the wiſdom and reſolution, even of thoſe children that are moſt hopeful and promiſing; but care muſt be taken to keep them out of harm's way.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 1—5. Jacob had no ſooner obtained the bleſſing, but immediately he was forced to run his country. This was, perhaps, to correct him for his dealing fraudulently with his father. The bleſſing ſhall be confirmed to him, and yet he ſhall ſmart for the indirect courſe he takes to obtain it.

While there is ſuch an allay as there is of ſin in our duties, we muſt expect an allay of trouble in our comforts.

We may obſerve likewiſe, that God's providences often ſeem to contradict his promiſes; yet when the myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed, we ſhall ſee that all was for the beſt; and that croſs providences did but render the promiſes and the accompliſhment of them the more illuſtrious.

Ver. 10—15. God's time to viſit his people with his comforts is, when they are moſt deſtitute of other comforts, and other comforters. When afflictions in the way of duty (as theſe were) do abound, then ſhall conſolations ſo much the *more* abound.

Obſerve here, The encouraging *viſion Jacob ſaw.* He ſaw a ladder which reached from earth to heaven, the angels aſcending and deſcending upon it, and God himſelf at the head of it. Now this repreſents two things that are very comfortable to good people at all times, and in all conditions:

1. The providence of God, by which there is a conſtant correſpondence kept up between heaven and earth. Providence doth its work gradually, and by ſteps: angels are employed as miniſtering ſpirits, to ſerve all the purpoſes and deſigns of providence, and the wiſdom of God is at the upper end of the ladder, directing all the motions of ſecond cauſes to the glory of the firſt cauſe.

2. The mediation of Chriſt: he is this ladder, the foot on earth in his human nature, the top in heaven in his divine nature: or, the former in his humiliation, the latter in his exaltation. All the intercourſe be-

tween heaven and earth, ſince the fall, is by this ladder. Chriſt is the way: all God's favours come to us, and all our ſervices go to him, by Chriſt. If God dwell with us, and we with him, it is by Chriſt. Thoſe are ſafe whom God protects, whoever purſues them.

God knows how to give his people graces and comforts accommodated to the events that ſhall be, as well as to thoſe that are. Whom God loves he never leaves. This promiſe is *ſure to all the ſeed*, Heb. xiii. 5. Saying and doing are not two things with God, whatever they are with us.

Ver. 16—22. God's manifeſtations of himſelf to his people carry their own evidence along with them.

We ſometimes meet with God where we little thought of meeting with him.

The more we ſee God, the more cauſe we ſee for holy trembling and bluſhing before him.

We need deſire no more to make us eaſy and happy, wherever we are, but to have God's preſence with us, and to be under his protection. It is comfortable in a journey to have a guide in an unknown way, a guard in a dangerous way; to be well carried, well provided for, and to have good company in any way; and they that have God with them, have all this in the beſt manner.

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1—8. After the viſions we have had of God, and the vows we have made to him in ſolemn ordinances, we ſhould run the way of his commandments with enlarged hearts, Heb. xii. 1.

The Divine Providence is to be acknowledged in all the little circumſtances which occur to make a journey, or other undertaking, comfortable and ſucceſsful.

Separate intereſts ſhould not take us off from joint and mutual help. When all the ſhepherds came together with their flocks, then, like loving neighbours, at watering-time they water their flocks together.

Thoſe that ſhew reſpect ordinarily have reſpect ſhewn them. As Jacob was civil to theſe ſtrangers, ſo he found them civil to him.

Thoſe that are neighbourly and friendly, ſhall have neighbourly and friendly uſage.

Ver. 15—29. Wherever we are, it is good to be employing ourſelves in ſome uſeful buſineſs, which will turn to a good account to ourſelves or others.

Inferior relations muſt not be impoſed upon: if it be their duty to ſerve us, it is our duty to reward them.

It is eaſy to obſerve how Jacob was repaid in his own coin. He had cheated his own father when he pretended to be Eſau, and now his father-in-law

cheated him. Herein how unrighteous ſoever Laban was, the Lord was righteous, as, Judg. i. 7. Even the righteous, if they take a falſe ſtep, are ſometimes thus recompenced in the earth.

Ver. 31—35. Leah called her fourth ſon Judah, *Praiſe*; ſaying, *Now will I praiſe the Lord.* And this was he, of whom, as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came. Note,

1. Whatever is the matter of our rejoicing, ought to be the matter of our thankſgiving. Freſh favours ſhould quicken us to praiſe God for former favours: *Now will I praiſe the Lord* more and better than I have done.

2. All our praiſes muſt centre in Chriſt, both as to the matter of them, and as the mediator of them. He deſcended from him whoſe name was *Praiſe*, for he is our praiſe. Is Chriſt formed in my heart? *Now will I praiſe the Lord.*

CHAP. XXX.

Ver. 1—13. It is our ſin and folly to place any creature in God's ſtead, and to place that confidence in any creature which is to be placed in God only.

It is an inſtance of the vanity of the world, and the fooliſhneſs bound up in our hearts, that moſt people value themſelves and govern themſelves more by reputation, than either by reaſon or religion: they think themſelves bleſſed, if the daughters do but call them ſo.

Ver. 14—24. As God juſtly denies the mercy we have been inordinately deſirous of, ſo ſometimes he graciouſly grants, at length, that which we have long waited for. He corrects our folly, and yet conſiders our frame, and doth not contend for ever.

Ver. 25—36. A good man, though he ſwear to his own hurt, will not change: and though others have deceived us, that will not juſtify us in deceiving them.

Thoſe that truſt in God, and in his providence and promiſe, though they have great families and ſmall incomes, can cheerfully hope that he that ſends mouths will ſend meat. He that feeds the brood of the ravens, will not ſtarve the ſeed of the righteous.

There is many a profitable good leſſon to be learned by experience. We are very unapt ſcholars if we have not learned by experience the evil of ſin, the treachery of our own hearts, the vanity of the world, the goodneſs of God, the gains of godlineſs, and the like.

Good men are bleſſings to the places where they live, even where they live meanly and obſcurely, as Jacob in the field, and Joſeph in the priſon, Gen. xxxix. 23.

God often bleſſes bad men with outward mercies, for the ſake of their godly relations; though it is ſeldom that they have either the wit to ſee it, or the grace to own it, as Laban did here.

Faith and charity, though they are excellent

things, muſt not take us off from making neceſſary proviſions for our own ſupport, and the ſupport of our families. We muſt, like Jacob, *truſt in the Lord and do good*, and yet we muſt, like him, *provide for our own houſes* alſo; he that doth not *is worſe than an infidel*, 1 Tim. v. 8.

CHAP. XXXI.

Ver. 1—16. Riches are glorious things in the eyes of carnal people; while to all thoſe that are converſant with heavenly things, they have no glory in compariſon with the glory which excelleth.

Worldly proſperity and ſucceſs is then doubly ſweet and comfortable, when we ſee it flowing, not from common providence, but from covenant love.

The heirs of Canaan muſt never reckon themſelves at home till they come thither, however they may ſeem to take root here.

Thoſe wives that are help-meets to their huſbands, will never be their hindrances, in doing that which God calls them to.

Ver. 17—24. The ſafety of good men is very much owing to the hold God has of the conſciences of bad men, and the acceſs he has to them.

God ſometimes appears wonderfully for the ſafety of his people, when they are upon the very brink of ruin. The Jews were ſaved from Haman's plot, when the king's decree *drew near to be put in execution*, Eſth. ix. 1.

Ver. 25—35. It is common for ill men, when they are diſappointed in their malicious projects, to pretend that they deſigned nothing but what was kind and fair. When they cannot do the miſchief they intended, they are loth it ſhould be thought that ever they intended it.

Thoſe that mean ill themſelves, are moſt apt to put the worſt conſtruction upon what others do innocently.

Ver. 36—42. Thoſe that in any employment have dealt faithfully, if they cannot obtain the credit of it with men, yet ſhall have the comfort of it in their own boſoms.

Servants ſhould take no leſs care of what they are intruſted with for their maſters, than if they were entitled to it as their own.

God is the patron of the oppreſſed; and thoſe who are wronged and yet not ruined, caſt down and yet not deſtroyed, muſt acknowledge him in their preſervation, and give him the glory of it.

Ver. 43—55. It is common for thoſe who are without natural affection to pretend much to it, when it will ſerve a turn.

When quarrels happen, we ſhould be willing to be friends again upon any terms. Peace and love are ſuch valuable jewels, that we can ſcarce buy them too dear. Better ſit down loſers than go on in ſtrife.

CHAP. XXXII.

Ver. 1, 2. Thoſe that keep in a good way, have always a good guard: angels themſelves are miniſtering ſpirits for their ſafety, Heb. i. 14. Where Jacob pitched his tents, they pitched theirs about him, Pſalm xxxiv. 7. When God deſigns his people for extraordinary trials, he prepares them by extraordinary comforts.

Ver. 3—8. A lively apprehenſion of danger, and a quickening fear ariſing from it, may very well conſiſt with an humble confidence in God's power and promiſe.

Ver. 9—12. Times of fear ſhould be times of prayer. Whatever frightens us ſhould drive us to our knees, to our God.

We may comfortably truſt God with our ſafety, while we carefully keep to our duty. If God be our guide, he will be our guard.

Self-denial and ſelf-abaſement will become us in all our addreſſes to the throne of grace.

The beſt and greateſt of men are utterly unworthy of the leaſt favour from God, and muſt be ready to own it upon all occaſions. Thoſe are beſt prepared for the greateſt mercies, that ſee themſelves unworthy of the leaſt.

Thoſe whoſe latter end doth greatly increaſe, ought, with humility and thankfulneſs, to remember how ſmall their beginning was.

Ver. 13—23. When we have prayed to God for any mercy, we muſt ſecond our prayers with our endeavours; elſe, inſtead of truſting God, we tempt him. We muſt ſo depend upon God's providence, as to make uſe of our own prudence. God anſwers our prayers by teaching us to order our affairs with diſcretion.

Ver. 24—32. Every thing is beautiful in its ſeaſon. Even the buſineſs of religion, and the comforts of communion with God, muſt ſometimes give way to the neceſſary affairs of this life. God *will have mercy and not ſacrifice.*

Spiritual bleſſings, which ſecure our felicity, are better and much more deſirable than fine notions that ſatisfy our curioſity. An intereſt in the angel's bleſſing is better than an acquaintance with his name. The tree of life is better than the tree of knowledge. Thus Jacob carried his point. A bleſſing he wreſtled for, and a bleſſing he had; nor did ever any of his praying ſeed ſeek in vain. See how wonderfully God condeſcends to countenance and crown importunate prayer. Thoſe that reſolve, though God ſlay them, yet to truſt in him, will at length be more than conquerors.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Ver. 1—4. Thoſe that have caſt their care upon God may look before them with ſatisfaction and compoſure of mind, cheerfully expecting the

iſſue, whatever it may be: come what will, nothing can come amiſs to him, whoſe heart is fixed, truſting in God.

Jacob bowed to Eſau. Note,

1. The way to recover peace where it has been broken, is, to do our duty, and pay our reſpects upon all occaſions, as if it had never been broken. It is the remembering and repeating of matters, that ſeparates friends, and perpetuates the ſeparation.

2. An humble and ſubmiſſive carriage goes a great way towards the turning away of wrath. The bullet flies over him that ſtoops.

Ver. 5—15. This prudence and tenderneſs of Jacob ought to be imitated by thoſe that have the care and charge of young people, in the things of God. They muſt not be over-driven at firſt, by heavy taſks in religious ſervices; but led as they can bear, making their work as eaſy to them as poſſible.

Ver. 16—20. Diſeaſes and dangers ſhould teach us how to value health and ſafety, and ſhould help to enlarge our hearts in thankfulneſs, when our going out and coming in has been ſignally preſerved.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Ver. 1—5. It is a very good thing for children to love home. It is a parent's wiſdom to make it eaſy to them, and then the duty of children to be eaſy in it.

The pride and vanity of young people betrays them to many ſnares.

Ver. 6—17. Note, 1. Uncleanneſs is folly, for it ſacrificeth the favour of God, the peace of conſcience, and all the ſoul can pretend to, that is ſacred and honourable, to a baſe and brutiſh luſt.

2. This folly is moſt ſhameful in Iſrael, in a family of Iſrael, where God is known and worſhipped, as he was in Jacob's tents, by the name of the God of Iſrael. Folly in Iſrael is ſcandalous indeed!

3. It is a good thing to have ſin put into an ill name: uncleanneſs is here proverbially called folly in Iſrael, 2 Sam. xiii. 12. Dinah is here called Jacob's daughter, for a warning to all the daughters of Iſrael, that they betray not themſelves to this folly.

Bloody deſigns have often been covered and carried on with a pretence of religion. Thus they have been accompliſhed moſt plauſibly, and moſt ſecurely: but this diſſembled piety is doubtleſs double iniquity. Religion is never more injured, nor God's ſacraments more profaned, than when they are thus uſed for a cloke of maliciouſneſs.

CHAP. XXXV.

Ver. 1—5. As many as God loves, he will remind of neglected duties, one way or other, by conſcience or providences.

The remembrance of former afflictions ſhould bring to mind the workings of our ſouls under them, Pſalm lxvi. 13, 14. The way of duty is the way of ſafety. While there was ſin in Jacob's houſe he was afraid of his neighbours; but now the ſtrange gods were put away, and they were all going together to Beth-el, his neighbours were afraid of him.

Ver. 6—15. Old ſervants in a family that have in their time been faithful and uſeful, ought to be reſpected. Honour was done to Deborah, at her death, by Jacob's family, though ſhe was not related to them, and though ſhe was aged. Former ſervices in ſuch a caſe muſt be remembered.

The ſweeteſt communions the ſaints have with God in this world are ſhort and tranſient, and ſoon have an end. Our viſion of God in heaven will be everlaſting; there we ſhall be ever with the Lord: but it is not ſo here.

Ver. 16—20. Jacob ſet up a pillar in remembrance of his joys, ver. 14. and here he ſet up one in remembrance of his ſorrows; for, as it may be of uſe to ourſelves to keep both in mind, ſo it may be of uſe to others, to tranſmit the memorials of both. The church long after owned that what God ſaid to

Jacob at Beth-el, both by his word and by his rod, was intended for their inſtruction, Hoſ. xii. 4. *There he ſpake with us.*

Ver. 21—29. Particular notice is taken of the amicable agreement of Eſau and Jacob, in ſolemnizing their father's funeral, to ſhew how God had wonderfully changed Eſau's mind, ſince he vowed his brother's murder immediately upon his father's death, chap. xxvii. 41.

Note, God has many ways of preventing ill men from doing the miſchiefs they intended: he can either tie their hands, or turn their hearts.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Ver. 1—8. Whatever oppoſition may be made, God's word will take place, and even thoſe that have oppoſed, will ſee themſelves ſome time or other under a neceſſity of yielding to it, and acquieſcing in it. Eſau had ſtruggled for Canaan, but now he tamely retires to Mount Seir; for God's counſels ſhall certainly ſtand, concerning the times before appointed, and the *bounds of our habitation.*

Ver. 31—43. While the Iſraelites dwelt in the houſe of bondage, and their Canaan was only the Land of Promiſe, the Edomites dwelt in their own habitations, and Seir was in their poſſeſſion.

Note, The children of this world have their all in hand, and nothing in hope, Luke xvi. 25. while the children of God have their all in hope, and next

to nothing in hand. But all things conſidered, it is better to have Canaan in promiſe, than Mount Seir in poſſeſſion.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Ver. 1—4. Though Joſeph was his father's darling, yet he was not bred up in idleneſs or delicacy. Thoſe do not truly love their children that do not innure them to buſineſs, and labour, and mortification. Fondling of children is with good reaſon called ſpoiling them. Thoſe that are trained up to do nothing, are likely to be good for nothing.

Though thoſe children are happy who have that in them which juſtly recommends them to their parents' particular love; yet it is the prudence of parents not to make a difference between one child and another, unleſs there be a great and manifeſt cauſe given for it, by the children's dutifulneſs or undutifulneſs. Paternal government muſt be impartial, and managed with a ſteady hand.

Ver. 5—11. Obſerve, Joſeph dreamed of his preferment, but he did not dream of his impriſonment. Thus many young people, when they are ſetting out in the world, think of nothing but proſperity and pleaſure, and never dream of trouble.

Ver. 12—22. Joſeph was a type of Chriſt. Though he was the beloved ſon of his Father, and hated by a wicked world, yet the Father ſent him out of his boſom to *viſit us* in great humility and love. He came from heaven to earth to ſeek and

ſave us; yet then malicious plots were laid againſt him. *He came to his own*, and his *own* not only *received him not*, but conſulted, *This is the heir, come let us kill him*, "crucify him, crucify him!" This he ſubmitted to in purſuance of his deſign to redeem and ſave us.

Ver. 23—30. God's providences often ſeem to contradict his purpoſes, even when they are ſerving them, and working at a diſtance towards their accompliſhment.

Ver. 31—36. Note, 1. Great affection to any creature doth but prepare for ſo much the greater affliction, when it is either removed from us, or embittered to us. Inordinate love commonly ends in immoderate grief.

2. Thoſe conſult neither the comfort of their ſouls, nor the credit of their religion, that are reſolved in their ſorrow. We muſt never ſay we *will* go to our grave mourning, becauſe we know not what joyful days providence may yet reſerve for us; and it is our wiſdom and duty to accommodate ourſelves to providence.

3. We often perplex ourſelves with imaginary troubles. We fancy things worſe than they are, and then afflict ourſelves more than we need. Sometimes there needs no more to comfort us, but to undeceive us. It is good to hope the beſt.

It is the wiſdom of parents not to bring up their children too delicately, becauſe they know not what hardſhips and mortifications providence may reduce

them to before they die. Jacob little thought that ever his beloved Joſeph ſhould be thus bought and ſold for a ſervant.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Ver. 1—11. When young people that have been well educated, begin to change their company, they will ſoon change their manners, and loſe their good education.

Ver. 12—23. Times of feſtivity often prove times of temptation, particularly to the ſin of uncleanneſs.

Fleſhly luſts are not only brutiſh, but ſottiſh and ruinous to men's ſecular intereſts. It is plain that whoredom, as well as wine, take away the heart firſt, elſe it would never take away the ſignet and the bracelets.

There are many who are more ſolicitous to preſerve their reputation with men, than to ſecure the favour of God, and a good conſcience: *leſt we be ſhamed*, goes farther with them, than *leſt we be damned*.

Ver. 24—30. It is a common thing for men to be ſevere againſt thoſe very ſins in others, which yet they allow in themſelves.

The wickedneſs which has been moſt ſecretly committed, and moſt induſtriouſly concealed, yet ſometimes is ſtrangely brought to light, to the ſhame and confuſion of thoſe who have ſaid, *No eye ſees*.

Thoſe do not truly repent of their ſins that do not forſake them.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Ver. 1—6. Note, 1. Thoſe that have wiſdom and grace, have that which cannot be taken away from them, whatever elſe they are robbed of. Joſeph's brethren had ſtripped him of his coat of many colours, but they could not ſtrip him of his virtue and prudence.

2. Thoſe that can ſeparate us from all our friends, yet cannot deprive us of the gracious preſence of our God. When Joſeph had none of all his relations with him, he had his God with him, even in the houſe of the Egyptian.

3. It is God's preſence with us that makes all we do proſperous.

Ver. 7—12. We are bound in honour, as well as juſtice and gratitude, not in any thing to injure thoſe that have a good opinion of us, and place a truſt in us, how ſecretly ſo ever it may be done. Gracious ſouls look upon this as the worſt thing in ſin, that it is againſt God, againſt his nature and his dominion, againſt his love and his deſign. They that love God for this reaſon, hate ſin.

Thoſe that would be kept from harm muſt keep themſelves out of harm's way.

It is better to loſe a good coat than loſe a good conſcience.

Ver. 13—18. It is no new thing for the beſt of

men to be falſely accuſed of the worſt of crimes, by thoſe who themſelves are the worſt of criminals.

Ver. 19—23. Thoſe that have a good conſcience in a priſon, have a good God there.

Wiſdom and virtue will ſhine in the narroweſt ſpheres. A good man will do good wherever he is, and will be able to ſing even in bonds and baniſhments; for the Spirit of the Lord is not bound, nor baniſhed, witneſs St. Paul, Phil. i. 12, 13.

CHAP. XL.

Ver. 5—19. See here 1. What a modeſt repreſentation Joſeph makes of his own caſe, ver. 15. He doth not reflect upon his brethren that ſold him, only ſaith, *I was ſtolen out of the land of the Hebrews*, i. e. unjuſtly ſent thence; no matter where the fault was. Nor doth he reflect on the wrong done him in this impriſonment by his miſtreſs, who was his proſecutrix, and his maſter who was his judge; but mildly avers his own innocency: *here have I done nothing that they ſhould put me in the dungeon.* Note, When we are called to vindicate ourſelves, we ſhould carefully avoid, as much as may be, ſpeaking ill of others.

2. What a modeſt requeſt he makes to the chief butler: only, think on me. Pray do me a kindneſs, if it lie in your way. And his particular petition is, *bring me out of this houſe.* He doth not ſay, bring me into Pharoah's houſe, get me a place at court. No; he begs for enlargement, not preferment.

Note, Providence ſometimes deſigns the greateſt honours for thoſe that leaſt covet or expect them.

CHAP. XLI.

Ver. 9—16. It is beſt to remember our duty, and to do it in its time; but if we have neglected that, it is next beſt to remember our faults, and repent of them, and do our duty at laſt: better late than never.

God's time for the enlargement of his people will appear at laſt to be the fitteſt time. If the chief butler had at firſt uſed his intereſt for Joſeph's enlargement, and had obtained it, it is probable, upon his releaſe, he would have gone back to the land of the Hebrews again, which he ſpoke of ſo feelingly, chap. xl. 15. and then he had neither been ſo bleſſed himſelf, nor ſuch a bleſſing to his family, as afterwards he proved. But ſtaying two years longer, and coming out now upon this occaſion to interpret the king's dreams, way was made for his great preferment. Thoſe that patiently wait for God, ſhall be paid for waiting; not only principal but intereſt, Lam. iii. 26.

Ver. 33—45. Fair warning ſhould always be followed with good counſel.

It is the wiſdom of princes to prefer thoſe, and the happineſs of people to have thoſe preferred, to places of power and truſt, in whom the Spirit of God is.

Ver. 46—57. See what changes of condition we are liable to in this world, and what need we have to *be joyful in the day of proſperity*, and *in the day of adverſity* to *conſider*, Eccl. vii. 14.

CHAP. XLII.

Ver. 1—6. It is obſervable that all the three patriarchs, to whom Canaan was the Land of Promiſe, met with famine in that land; which was not only to try their faith, whether they could truſt God, though he ſlay them, though he ſtarve them; but to teach them to ſeek the better country, that is, the heavenly, Heb. xi. 14, 15. We have need of ſomething to wean us from this world, and make us long for a better.

Ver. 7—20. Bad words are ſoon learned by converſe with thoſe that uſe them, but not ſo ſoon unlearned.

With thoſe that fear God, we have reaſon to expect fair dealing.

Ver. 21—28. See here 1. The office of conſcience. It is a remembrancer to bring to mind things long ſince ſaid and done, to ſhew us wherein we have erred, though it were long ago; as this reflection here was above twenty years after the ſin was committed. As time will not wear out the guilt of ſin, ſo it will not blot out the records of conſcience.

2. The benefit of afflictions. Thoſe often prove

a happy and effectual means of awakening conſcience, and bringing ſin to our remembrance, Job xiii. 26.

3. The evil of guilt concerning our brethren. Of all their ſins it was that which conſcience now reproached them for. Whenever we think we have wrong done us, we ought to remember the wrong we have done others, Eccl. vii. 21, 22.

Ver. 29—38. We often perplex ourſelves with our own miſtakes, even in matters of fact. Through our ignorance or miſtake, and the weakneſs of our faith, we often apprehend that to be againſt us which is really for us.

It is bad with a family when children carry themſelves ſo ill that their parents know not how to truſt them.

CHAP. XLIII.

Ver. 11—14. Jacob had ſaid, chap. xlii. 38. *my ſon ſhall not go down*; but now he is over-perſuaded to conſent.

Note, It is no fault, but our wiſdom and duty, to alter our purpoſes and reſolutions, when there is a good reaſon for our ſo doing. Conſtancy is a virtue, but obſtinacy is not.

It is God's prerogative not to repent, and his only to make unchangeable reſolves.

Honeſty obliges us to make reſtitution, not only of that which comes to us by our own fault, but of that which comes to us by the miſtakes of others.

Though we get it by overſight, if we keep it when the overſight is diſcovered, it is kept by deceit.

Note, 1. Providence diſpenſeth its gifts variouſly. Some countries produce one commodity, others another, that commerce may be preſerved.

2. Honey and ſpice will never make up the want of bread corn. The famine was ſore in Canaan, and yet they had balm, and myrrh, &c. We may live well enough upon plain food, without dainties; but we cannot live upon dainties, without plain food. Let us thank God that that which is moſt needful and uſeful, is generally moſt cheap and common.

Thoſe that would find mercy with men muſt ſeek it of God, who has all hearts in his hands, and turns them as he pleaſeth.

CHAP. XLIV.

Ver. 1—17. Even in thoſe afflictions wherein we apprehend ourſelves wronged by men, yet we muſt own that God is righteous, and finds out our iniquity.

We cannot judge what men are, by what they have been formerly; nor what they will do by what they have done. Age and experience may make men wiſer and better. They that had ſold Joſeph, yet would not now abandon Benjamin. The worſt may mend in time.

Ver. 18—34. Upon the whole matter let us

take notice, 1. How prudently Judah ſuppreſſed all mention of the crime that was charged upon Benjamin. Had he ſaid any thing by way of acknowledgment of it, he had reflected on Benjamin's honeſty, and ſeemed to ſuſpect that. Had he ſaid any thing by way of denial of it, he had reflected on Joſeph's juſtice, and the ſentence he had paſſed: therefore he wholly waves that head, and appeals to Joſeph's pity.

2. What good reaſon dying Jacob had to ſay, *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren ſhall praiſe*, chap. xlix. 8. for he excelled them all in boldneſs, wiſdom, eloquence, and eſpecially tenderneſs for their father and family.

3. Judah's faithful adherence to Benjamin, now in his diſtreſs, was recompenſed long after by the conſtant adherence of the tribe of Benjamin to that of Judah, when all the other ten tribes deſerted it.

4. How fitly doth the apoſtle, when he is diſcourſing of the mediation of Chriſt, obſerve, That *our Lord ſprang out of Judah*, Heb. vii. 14. for, like his father Judah, he not only *made interceſſion for the tranſgreſſors*, but he became a ſurety for them, as it follows there, ver. 22. teſtifying therein a very tender concern both for his father and for his brethren.

CHAP. XLV.

Ver. 1—15. Providence looks a great way forward, and has a long reach. Even long before the years of plenty, providence was preparing for the ſupply of Jacob's houſe, in the years of famine.

God often works by contraries. The envy and contention of brethren threatens the ruin of families; yet that proves the occaſion of preſerving Jacob's family.

It is the duty of children, if the neceſſity of their parents do at any time require it, to ſupport and ſupply them to the utmoſt of their ability.

Ver. 16—24. Thoſe for whom Chriſt intends ſhares in his heavenly glory, ought not to regard the ſtuff of this world. The beſt of its enjoyments are but ſtuff, but lumber; We cannot make ſure of it while we are here, much leſs can we carry it away with us. Let us not therefore be ſolicitous about it, nor ſet our eyes or hearts upon it. There are better things reſerved for us in that bleſſed land, whither our Joſeph is gone to prepare a place

Joſeph having forgiven all his brethren, lays this obligation upon them, not to upbraid one another. This charge our Lord Jeſus has given to us, that we love one another, that we live in peace, that whatever occurs, or whatever former occurrences are remembered, we fall not out. For,

1. We are brethren: we have all one father.

2. We are *his* brethren, and we ſhame our relation to him who is our peace, if we fall out.

3. We are all guilty, verily guilty; and inſtead of quarrelling with one another, have a great deal of reaſon to fall out with ourſelves.

4. We are, or hope to be, forgiven of God, whom we have all offended; and therefore ſhould be ready to forgive one another.

5. We are *by the way*; a way that lies through the land of Egypt, where we have many eyes upon us, that ſeek occaſion and advantage againſt us: a way that leads to Canaan where we hope to be for ever in perfect peace.

Ver. 25—28. It is good for us all to make death familiar to us, and to ſpeak of it as near; that we may think how much we have to do before we die, that we may do it with all our might; and may enjoy our comforts as thoſe that muſt quickly die and leave them.

CHAP. XLVI.

Ver. 1—4. Thoſe that go where God ſends them, ſhall certainly have God with them; and that is enough to ſecure them wherever they are, and to ſilence their fears. We may ſafely venture even into Egypt if God go down with us.

Ver. 28—34. It is the duty of children to reverence their parents, yea, though providence, as to outward condition, hath advanced them above their

parents. Jacob wiſhed to die now, and yet lived ſeventeen years longer; which, as *our* lives go, is a conſiderable part of a man's age.

Note, Death will not always come juſt when we call for it, whether in a paſſion of ſorrow, or in a paſſion of joy. Our times are in God's hand, and not in our own. We muſt die juſt when God pleaſes, and not either juſt when we are ſurfeited with the pleaſures of life, or juſt when we are overwhelmed with its griefs.

CHAP. XLVII.

Ver. 1—12. Note 1. All that have a place in the world, ſhould have an employment in it, according to their capacity; ſome occupation or other, mental or manual. Thoſe that need not work for their bread, yet muſt have ſomething to do to keep them from idleneſs.

2. Magiſtrates ſhould enquire into the occupation of their ſubjects, as thoſe that have the care of the public welfare; for idle people are as drones in the hive, unprofitable burdens of the commonwealth.

Ver. 13—26. Thoſe miniſters of ſtate are worthy of double honour, both for wiſdom and integrity, that keep the balance even between prince and people; ſo that liberty and property may not intrench upon prerogative, nor the prerogative bear hard upon liberty and property. In the multitude of ſuch counſellors there is ſafety.

Ver. 27—31. Obſerve, The comfort Jacob lived in. While the Egyptians were impoveriſhed in their own land, Jacob was repleniſhed in a ſtrange land. He lived ſeventeen years after he came into Egypt, far beyond his own expectation. Seventeen years he had nouriſhed Joſeph, for ſo old he was when he was ſold from him, chap. xxxvii. 2. and now, by way of requital, ſeventeen years Joſeph nouriſhed him. Obſerve, how kindly providence ordered Jacob's affairs, that when he was old and leaſt able to bear care and fatigue, he had leaſt occaſion for it, being well provided for by his ſon, without his own forecaſt. Thus God conſiders the frame of his people.

Nothing will better help to make a death-bed eaſy, than the certain proſpect of a reſt in Canaan, after death.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Ver. 1—7. Viſiting the ſick, to whom we lay under obligations, or may have opportunity of doing good, either for body or ſoul, is our duty. The ſick bed is a proper place both for giving comfort and counſel to others, and receiving inſtruction ourſelves. Joſeph took his two ſons with him, that they might receive their dying grandfather's bleſſing, and that what they might ſee in him, and hear from him, might make an abiding impreſſion upon them.

Note, 1. It is good to acquaint young people

that are coming into the world with the aged ſervants of God that are going out of it, whoſe dying teſtimony to the goodneſs of God, and the pleaſantneſs of wiſdom's ways, may be a great encouragement to the riſing generation.

2. Pious parents are deſirous of a bleſſing, not only for themſelves, but for their children.

Ver 8—22. It becomes the ſervants of God when they are old and dying, to witneſs for God, that they have found him gracious. Our experiences of God's goodneſs to us are improveable, both for the encouragement of others to ſerve God, and for encouragement of ourſelves in bleſſing them, and praying for them.

It ſhould recommend religion and the ſervice of God to us, that God was the God of our fathers, and they had ſatisfaction in walking before him.

CHAP. XLIX.

Ver. 1—4. Children muſt diligently hearken to what their godly parents ſay, particularly when they are dying. *Hear, ye children, the inſtruction of a father*, which carries with it both authority and affection, Prov. iv. 1.

Ver. 5—7. Note, 1. Anger is the cauſe and original of a great deal of ſin, and expoſeth us to the curſe of God and his judgment, Matth. v. 22.

2. We ought always, in the expreſſions of our zeal, carefully to diſtinguiſh between the ſinner and the

ſin; ſo as not to love or bleſs the ſin for the ſake of the perſon, nor to hate or curſe the perſon for the ſake of the ſin.

Shameful diſperſions are the juſt puniſhment of ſinful unions and confederacies.

Ver. 8—12. Much of that which is here ſaid concerning Judah, is to be applied to our Lord Jeſus.

1. He is the ruler of all his Father's children, the conqueror of all his Father's enemies, and the praiſe of all the ſaints.

2. He is the *lion of the tribe of Judah*, as he is called, with reference to this, Rev. v. 5. who having ſpoiled principalities and powers, went up a conqueror, and couched ſo as none can ſtir him up, when he ſat down on the right hand of the Father.

3. To him belongs the ſcepter, he is the lawgiver, and to him ſhall the gathering of the people be, as the deſire of all nations, Hag. ii. 7. who being lifted up from the earth ſhould draw all men unto him, John xii. 32. and in whom the children of God, that are ſcattered abroad, ſhould meet as the center of their unity, John xi. 52.

4. In him there is plenty of all that which is nouriſhing and refreſhing to the ſoul, and which maintains and cheers the divine life in it. In him we may have wine and milk, the riches of Judah's tribe, without money, and without price, Iſa. lv. 1.

Ver. 13—21. The cauſe of God and his people, though it may ſeem for a time to be baffled and run

down, yet it will be victorious at laſt. Grace in the ſoul is often foiled in its conflicts: troops of corruption overcome it, but the cauſe is God's, and grace will in the iſſue come off conqueror, yea, *more than conqueror*, Rom. viii. 37.

Ver. 28—33. Whatever rebukes of God's word or providence we are under at any time, yet as long as we have an intereſt in God's covenant, a place and a name among his people, and good hopes of a ſhare in the heavenly Canaan, we muſt account ourſelves bleſſed.

If God's people be our people, death will gather us to them.

CHAP. L.

Ver. 1—6. Though Jacob was old and decrepit, and muſt needs die in a courſe of nature; though he was poor, comparatively, and a conſtant charge to his ſon Joſeph, yet ſuch an affection he had for a loving father, and ſo ſenſible was he of the loſs of a prudent, pious, praying father, that he could not part with him without floods of tears.

Note, As it is an honour to die lamented, ſo it is the duty of ſurvivors to lament the death of thoſe that have been uſeful in their day, though for ſome time they may have ſurvived their uſefulneſs.

Ver. 15—21. When providence has removed parents by death, the beſt method ought to be taken, not only for the prevention of quarrels among the children, (which often happens about dividing the

eſtate) but for the preſerving of acquaintance and love, that unity may continue even when that center of unity is taken away.

Note, 1. When God makes uſe of men's agency for the performance of his counſels, it is common for him to mean one thing, and them another, even the quite contrary; but God's counſel ſhall ſtand: ſee Iſa. x. 7.

2. God often brings good out of evil, and ſerves the deſigns of his providence, even by the ſins of men; not that he is the author of ſin, far be it from us to think ſo; but his infinite wiſdom ſo over-rules events, and directs the chain of them, that in the iſſue that ends in his praiſe, which in its own nature had a direct tendency to his diſhonour: as the putting of Chriſt to death, Acts ii. 23. This doth not make ſin the leſs ſinful, nor ſinners the leſs puniſhable; but it redounds greatly to the glory of God's wiſdom.

EXODUS.

CHAPTER I. VER. 1—7.

WE muſt look upon ourſelves, and our brethren, and all we converſe with, as dying, and haſtening out of the world. This generation paſſeth away as that did which went before.

Ver. 8—14. The land of Egypt at length becomes to Iſrael a houſe of bondage, though hitherto it had been a happy ſhelter and ſettlement for them.

Note, The place of our ſatisfaction may ſoon become the place of our affliction; and that may prove the greateſt croſs to us, of which we ſaid *this ſame ſhall comfort us.*

Thoſe may prove our ſworn enemies, whoſe parents were our faithful friends; nay, the ſame perſons that loved us, may poſſibly turn to hate us: therefore ceaſe from man, and ſay not concerning any place on this ſide heaven, this is my reſt for ever.

The beſt, the moſt uſeful, and acceptable ſervices done to men, are ſeldom remembered or recompenſed to thoſe that did them; either in their memory, or in their poſterity, after their death, Eccl. ix. 15. And therefore our great care ſhould be to

ſerve God, and pleaſe him who is not unrighteous, whatever men are, to *forget our work and labour of love*, Heb. vi. 10.

It has been the policy of perſecutors to repreſent God's Iſrael as a dangerous people, hurtful to kings and provinces, not fit to be truſted, nay, not fit to be tolerated; that they may have ſome pretence for the barbarous treatment they deſign them, Ezra iv. 12. Eſth. iii. 8.

The policies of the church's enemies aim to defeat the promiſes of the church's God, but in vain: God's counſels ſhall ſtand.

Times of affliction have often been the church's growing times, *ſub pondere creſcit*. Chriſtianity ſpread moſt when it was perſecuted: the blood of the martyrs was the ſeed of the church. They that take counſel againſt the Lord and his Iſrael, do but *imagine a vain thing*, Pſalm ii. 1. and create ſo much the greater vexation to themſelves. Earth and hell cannot diminiſh thoſe whom heaven will increaſe.

Ver. 15—22. If the commands of men be any way contrary to the commands of God, we muſt obey God and not man, Acts iv. 19. No power on earth can warrant us, much leſs oblige us, to ſin againſt God, our chief Lord.

Where the fear of God rules in the heart, it will preſerve it from that ſnare which the inordinate fear of man brings.

The ſervices done for God's Iſrael are often re-

paid in kind. The midwives kept up the Iſraelites' houſes, and in recompence for it, *God made them houſes.*

Religion and piety is a good friend to outward proſperity. The fear of God in a houſe will help to build it up and eſtabliſh it.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1—4. Obſerve the beauty of providence: juſt at the time when Pharoah's cruelty roſe to its height, the deliverer was born. When men are projecting the church's ruin, God is preparing for its ſalvation.

Faith in God's promiſe is ſo far from ſuperſeding, that it rather excites and quickens to, the uſe of lawful means for the obtaining mercy. Duty is ours; events are God's. Faith in God will ſet us above the enſnaring fear of man.

In times of extreme difficulty, it is good to venture upon the providence of God. Thus, to have expoſed the child Moſes, while the parents might have preſerved it, had been to tempt providence; but when they could not, it was brave to truſt providence.

Ver. 5—10. God often raiſes up friends for his people, even among their enemies. Pharoah cruelly ſeeks Iſrael's deſtruction; but his own daughter charitably compaſſionates a Hebrew child; and, not only ſo, but, beyond her intention, preſerves Iſrael's deliverer. *O Lord how wonderful are thy counſels!*

Ver. 11—15. We muſt take heed of being prejudiced againſt the ways and people of God, by the follies and peeviſhneſs of ſome particular perſons that profeſs religion.

Ver. 16—22. God will find hiding places for his people in the day of their diſtreſs; nay, he will himſelf be to them a little ſanctuary, and will ſecure them either under heaven, or in heaven.

Egypt accompliſhed Moſes for a ſcholar, a gentleman, a ſtateſman, a ſoldier, all which accompliſhments would be afterwards of uſe to him; but yet lacketh he one thing, in which the court of Egypt could not befriend him. He that was to do all by divine revelation, muſt know, by a long experience, what it was to live a life of communion with God; and in this he would be greatly furthered by the ſolitude and retirement of a ſhepherd's life in Midian. By the former he was prepared to rule in Jeſhurun; but by the latter he was prepared to converſe with God in Mount Horeb; near which mount he had ſpent much of his time. Thoſe that know what it is to be alone with God in holy exerciſes, are acquainted with better delights than ever Moſes taſted in the court of Pharoah.

Ver. 23—25. If Moſes in Midian at any time began to think how much better his condition might have been, had he ſtaid among the courtiers, he muſt of himſelf think this alſo, how much worſe it would have been, if he had had his lot with his brethren. It was a great degrading to him to be

keeping ſheep in Midian; but better ſo than making bricks in Egypt. The conſideration of our brethren's afflictions, would help to reconcile us to our own.

It is a ſign God is coming towards us with deliverance, when he inclines and enables us to cry to him for it.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1—6. The years of Moſes' life are remarkably divided into three forties: the firſt forty he ſpent as a prince in Pharoah's court; the ſecond as a ſhepherd in Midian; the third as a king in Jeſhurun; ſo changeable is the life of men, eſpecially the life of good men. He had now finiſhed his ſecond forty, when he received his commiſſion to bring Iſrael out of Egypt.

Note, Sometimes it is long before God calls his ſervants out to that work which of old he deſigned them for, and has been graciouſly preparing them for. Moſes was born to be Iſrael's deliverer, and yet not a word is ſaid of it to him, till he is eighty years of age.

God will encourage induſtry. The ſhepherds were keeping their flocks, when they received the tidings of our Saviour's birth, Luke ii. 8. Satan loves to find us idle: God is well pleaſed when he finds us employed.

Retirement is a good friend to our communion with God. When we are alone the Father is with

us. Moſes ſaw more of God in a deſart, than ever he had ſeen in Pharoah's court.

Thoſe that would have communion with God muſt attend upon him, and approach to him in theſe ordinances wherein he is pleaſed to manifeſt himſelf, and his power and glory, though it be in a buſh. Come to the treaſure though it be in an earthen veſſel.

We ought to approach God with a ſolemn pauſe and preparation; and though bodily exerciſe alone profits little, yet we ought to glorify God with our bodies, and to expreſs our inward reverence, by a grave and reverent behaviour in the worſhip of God; carefully avoiding every thing that looks light and rude, and unbecoming the awfulneſs of the ſervice.

The more we ſee of God, the more cauſe we ſhall ſee to worſhip him with reverence and godly fear.

Even the manifeſtations of God's grace and covenant love, ſhould increaſe our humble reverence of him.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1—9. Thoſe whom God deſigns for preferment, he clothes with humility: the moſt fit for ſervice are the leaſt forward.

Ver. 10—17. An unwilling mind will take up with a ſorry excuſe rather than none; and is willing to devolve thoſe ſervices upon others that have any thing of difficulty or danger in them.

Aaron could ſpeak well, and yet was far inferior to Moſes in wiſdom. God diſpenſeth his gifts variouſly to the children of men, that we may ſee our need one of another, and each may contribute ſomething to the *good of the body*, 1 Cor. xii. 21. The tongue of Aaron with the head and heart of Moſes, would make one completely fit for this embaſſy.

Even Aaron that could ſpeak well, yet could not ſpeak to purpoſe, unleſs God were with his mouth: without the conſtant aids of divine grace, the beſt gifts will fail.

Ver. 18—23. Here, Moſes obtains leave of his father-in-law to return into Egypt. His father-in-law had been kind to him when he was a ſtranger, and therefore he would not be ſo uncivil as to leave his family, nor ſo unjuſt as to leave his ſervice, without giving him notice.

Note, The honour of being admitted into communion with God, and employed for him, doth not diſcharge us from the duties of our relations and callings in this world. Moſes ſaid nothing to his father-in-law (for ought appears) of the glorious appearance of God to him: ſuch favours we are to be thankful for to God, but not to boaſt of before men.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1, 2. God will own his people, though never ſo poor and deſpicable, and will find a time to plead their cauſe. The Iſraelites are ſlaves in Egypt; but they are my people, ſaith God, and I will not ſuffer them to be always trampled upon. God delivers his people out of the hand of their enemies, that they may ſerve him, and ſerve him cheerfully.

Ver. 3—9. The malice of Satan has often repreſented the ſervice and worſhip of God, as fit employment for thoſe that have nothing elſe to do, and the buſineſs only of the idle; whereas, indeed, it is the indiſpenſible duty of thoſe that are moſt buſy in the world.

Ver. 10—14. What diſappointments we often meet with after the raiſing of our expectations! The Iſraelites were now lately encouraged to hope for enlargement; but behold greater diſtreſſes! This teaches us always to rejoice with trembling.

What ſtrange ſteps God ſometimes takes in delivering his people! he often brings them to the utmoſt ſtraights, when he is juſt ready to appear for them. The loweſt ebbs go before the higheſt tides, and very cloudy mornings commonly introduce the faireſt days, Deut. xxxii. 36. God's time to help is when things are at the worſt, and providence verifies the paradox, *The worſe the better.*

Ver. 15—23. It is common for the beſt actions to be put under the worſt characters: holy diligence in the beſt buſineſs, is cenſured by many as culpable careleſſneſs in the buſineſs of the world.

Thoſe that are called out to public ſervice for God, and their generation, muſt expect to be tried, not only by the malicious threats of proud enemies, but by the unjuſt and unkind cenſures of unthinking friends, who judge only by outward appearance, and look but a little way before them.

When we find ourſelves at any time perplexed and embarraſſed in the way of our duty, we ought to have recourſe to God, and lay open our caſe before him, by faithful and fervent prayer. If we retreat, retreat to him and no farther.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1—9. Now the affair is come to a criſis. Things are as bad as they can be; Pharoah is in the height of pride, and Iſrael in the depth of miſery. Now is my time to appear, ſaith the Lord.

Note, Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Diſconſolate ſpirits often put from them the comforts they are entitled to, and ſtand in their own light. See Iſa. xxviii. 12. Strong paſſions oppoſe ſtrong conſolations. By indulging ourſelves in diſcontent and fretfulneſs, we deprive ourſelves of the comfort we might have both from God's word and

providence, and muſt thank ourſelves if we go comfortleſs.

Ver. 10—13. The frowardneſs and untractableneſs of thoſe that are called Chriſtians, is a very great diſcouragement to miniſters, and makes them ready to deſpair of ſucceſs, in dealing with thoſe that are atheiſtical and profane.

Though our infirmities ought to humble us, yet they ought not to diſcourage us from doing our beſt in any ſervice we have to do for God.

His ſtrength is made perfect in our weakneſs.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1—7. It is, and ought to be, ſatisfaction enough to God's meſſengers, that whatever contradiction and oppoſition may be given them, thus far they ſhall gain their point, that God will be glorified in the ſucceſs of their embaſſy, and all his choſen Iſrael will be ſaved; and then they have no reaſon to ſay, that they have laboured in vain.

Ver. 8—13. The ſerpent which Aaron's rod was turned into, ſwallowed up the others; which was ſufficient to have convinced Pharoah on which ſide the right lay.

Note, Great is the truth and will prevail. The cauſe of God will undoubtedly triumph at laſt over all competition and contradiction, and will reign alone, Dan. ii. 45.

Ver. 14—25. The Egyptians had ſtained the river Nile with the blood of the Hebrew children;

and now God made that river all bloody: thus he gave them blood to drink, for they were worthy, Rev. xvi. 3, 4. Never any thirſted for blood, but ſooner or later they had enough of it.

One of the firſt miracles Moſes wrought was turning water into blood; but one of the firſt miracles our Lord Jeſus wrought was turning water into wine: for the law was given by Moſes, and it was a diſpenſation of death and terror; but grace and truth, which, like wine, makes glad the heart, came by Jeſus Chriſt.

See what miſchievous work ſin makes. If the things that have been our comforts prove our croſſes, we muſt thank ourſelves; it is ſin that turns our waters into blood.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1—15. See what reaſon we have to ſtand in awe of God, who, when he pleaſeth, can arm the ſmalleſt parts of the creation againſt us. If God be our enemy, all the creatures are at war with us. Thoſe that bid defiance to God and prayer in a day of extremity, firſt or laſt will be made to ſee their need of both, and will cry, Lord, Lord, Matth. vii. 22.

Thoſe that had bantered prayer have been brought to beg it; and the rich man that had ſcorned Lazarus courted him for a drop of water.

Till the heart is renewed by the grace of God, the

impreſſions made by the force of affliction do not abide: the convictions wear off, and the promiſes that were extorted are forgotten. Till the diſpoſition of the air is changed, what thaws in the ſun will freeze again in the ſhade.

Ver. 16—19. Obſerve, How this plague of lice was inflicted on the Egyptians. The frogs were produced out of the waters, but thoſe lice out of *the duſt of the earth*; for, out of any part of the creation, God can fetch a ſcourge wherewith to correct thoſe that rebel againſt him. He hath many arrows in his quiver. Even the *duſt of the earth* obeys him. Sooner or later God will extort, even from his enemies, acknowledgement of his own ſovereignty and over-ruling power.

Thoſe that are not made better by God's word and providences, are commonly made worſe by them.

Ver. 20—32. The Lord knows them that are his, and will make it appear perhaps in this world, however in the other, that he hath ſet them apart for himſelf.

A mighty ſtruggle here was between Pharoah's convictions and his corruptions. His convictions ſaid, let the children of Iſrael go, his corruptions ſaid, yet not very far away; but he ſided with his corruptions againſt his convictions, and it was his ruin.

Reigning luſts break through the ſtrongeſt bonds, and make men impudently preſumptuous and ſcandalouſly perfidious.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 8—12. Obſerve here concerning the plague of boils and blains, That when the Egyptians were not wrought upon by the death of their cattle, God ſent a plague that ſeized their own bodies, and touched them to the quick. If leſſer judgments do not their work, God will ſend greater.

Now *the Lord hardened* Pharoah's heart. Before he had *hardened his own heart*; and now God juſtly gave him up to his own heart's luſts, to a reprobate mind and ſtrong deluſions; permitting Satan to blind and harden him, and ordering every thing from henceforward ſo as to make him more and more obſtinate.

Note, Wilful hardneſs is commonly puniſhed with judicial hardneſs.

If men ſhut their eyes againſt the light, it is juſt with God to cloſe them. Let us dread this as the ſoreſt judgment a man can be under on this ſide hell.

Ver. 13—21. God can ſend plagues *upon the heart*, either by making it ſenſeleſs, or by making it hopeleſs, and thoſe are the worſt of plagues.

Obſtinate infidelity is deaf to the faireſt warnings and the wiſeſt counſels, which leaves the blood of them that periſh upon their own heads.

Ver. 22—35. God makes the clouds, not only his ſtore-houſes, whence he drops fatneſs on his people; but his magazines, whence, when he pleaſ-

eth, he can draw out a moſt formidable train of artillery, wherewith to deſtroy his enemies.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1—11. It is juſtly expected from the greateſt of men, that they humble themſelves before the great God, and it is at their peril if they refuſe to do it.

Ver. 12—20. When God convinceth men of ſin, and humbleth them for it, their contempt of God's miniſters, and the word of the Lord in their mouths, will certainly come into the account, and lie heavy upon their conſciences.

Counterfeit repentance commonly cheats men with general promiſes, and is loth to covenant againſt particular ſins.

There are thoſe who in diſtreſs implore the help of other people's prayers, but have no mind to pray for themſelves; ſhewing thereby that they have no true love to God, nor any delight in communion with him.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1—3. One way or other God will right the injured, that in an humble ſilence commit their cauſe to him, and will ſee to it that none be loſers at laſt by their patient ſuffering, any more than by their ſervices.

Ver. 4—10. To be angry at nothing but ſin, is the way not to ſin in anger.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1—20. When our heads are fulleſt of care, and our hands of buſineſs, yet we muſt not forget our religion, nor ſuffer ourſelves to be indiſpoſed for acts of devotion.

In times of common calamity, God will ſecure his own people, and ſet a mark upon them: they ſhall be hid, either in heaven or under heaven; preſerved either from the ſtroke of judgements, or at leaſt from the ſting of them. The *blood of ſprinkling* is the ſaints ſecurity, in times of common calamity; that is it which marks them for God, pacifies conſcience, and gives them boldneſs of acceſs to the throne of grace, and ſo becomes a wall of protection round them, and a wall of partition between them and the children of this world.

Ver. 21—28. It is a good thing to ſee children inquiſitive about the things of God. It is to be hoped they will find the way that are careful to aſk it. Chriſt himſelf, when a child, *heard and aſked queſtions*, Luke ii. 46.

It concerns us all rightly to underſtand the meaning of thoſe holy ordinances wherein we worſhip God; what is the nature and what the end of them; what is ſignified, and what intended; what is the duty

expected from us in them, and what the advantages to be expected by us.

Distinguishing mercies are very obliging. When *a thousand fall at our side, and ten thousand at our right hand*, and yet we are preserved, and have our lives given us for a prey: this should greatly affect us, Psalm xci. 7. In war or pestilence, if the arrow of death have passed by us, passed over us, hit the next to us, and just missed us, we must not say it was by chance that we were preserved, but by the special providence of our God.

Old mercies to ourselves or to our fathers must not be forgotten, but had in everlasting remembrance, that God may be praised, our faith in him encouraged, and our hearts enlarged in his service.

Ver. 37—42. The servants of God must not be slaves to their appetites, nor solicitous to wind up all the delights of sense to the height of pleasurableness. We should be willing to take up with dry bread, nay, with unleavened bread, rather than neglect or delay any service we have to do for God, as those whose meat and drink it is to do his will.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1—10. God, who is the first and best, should have the first and best; and to him we should resign that which is most dear to us, and most valuable in itself.

Care muſt be taken betimes to inſtruct children in the knowledge of God.

It is particularly of great uſe to acquaint children with the ſtories of the Scripture, and to make thoſe familiar to them.

It is a debt we owe to the honour of God, and to the benefit of our children's ſouls, to tell them of the great works God hath done for his church; both thoſe which we have ſeen with our eyes done in our day; and thoſe which we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us.

Ver. 11—16. Children ſhould be directed and encouraged to aſk their parents queſtions concerning the things of God, which would be, perhaps, of all others, the moſt profitable way of catechiſing; and parents muſt furniſh themſelves with uſeful knowledge, that they may be ready always to give an anſwer to their enquiries.

Ver. 17—22. There were two ways from Egypt to Canaan. One was a ſhort cut from the north of Egypt, to the ſouth of Canaan, perhaps about four or five days journey: the other was much farther about, through the wilderneſs, and that was the way which God choſe to lead his people Iſrael in.

He led them ſome hundreds of miles about, and yet, Pſalm cvii. 7. *He led them forth by the right way:* God's way is the right way, though it ſeem about. If we think he leads not his people the neareſt way, yet we may be ſure he leads them the

beſt way, and ſo it will appear when we come to our journey's end. *Judge nothing before the time.*

Thoſe whom God brings into a wilderneſs, he will not leave nor loſe there, but will take care to lead them through it.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1—9. God ſometimes raiſeth difficulties in the way of the ſalvation of his people, that he may have the glory of ſubduing them, and helping his people over them.

What ſeems to tend to the church's ruin is often over-ruled to the ruin of the church's enemies, whoſe pride and malice are fed by providence, that they may be ripened for deſtruction.

Thoſe that in good earneſt ſet their faces heavenward, and will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt expect to be ſet upon by Satan's temptations and terrors. He will not tamely part with any out of his ſervice, nor go out without raging, Mark ix. 36.

Ver. 10—14. Here is the fright that the children of Iſrael were in when they perceived that Pharoah purſued them. They knew very well the ſtrength and rage of the enemy, and their own weakneſs. Numerous indeed they were, but all foot, unarmed, undiſciplined, diſquieted by long ſervitude, and, (which was worſt of all), now penned up by the ſituation of their camp, ſo that they could not make their eſcape. On one hand was Pi-hahi-

roth, a range of craggy rocks unpaſſable; on the other hand were Migdol and Baal-zephon, which, ſome think, were forts and garriſons upon the frontiers of Egypt; before them was the ſea, behind them were the Egyptians; ſo that there was no way open for them but upwards, and thence their deliverance came.

Note, We may be in the way of our duty, following God, and haſtening towards heaven; and yet may be in great ſtraights, *troubled on every ſide*, 2 Cor. iv. 8.

Ver. 15—20. When we are in the way of our duty, though we meet with difficulties we muſt go forward, and not ſtand at a gaze; mind preſent work, and then leave the event to God; uſe means and truſt him with the iſſue.

Ver. 21—31. The ruin of ſinners is brought on by their own preſumption, which hurries them headlong into the pit. They are ſelf-deſtroyers.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1—21. When we have received ſpecial mercy from God, we ought to be quick and ſpeedy in our returns of praiſe to him, before time, and the deceitfulneſs of our own hearts, loſe the good impreſſions that have been made.

It is common for men to be moſt elevated with the hopes of ſucceſs when they are upon the brink of ruin, which makes their ruin ſo much the ſorer.

Thoſe whom God takes under his conduct, he will guide to his holy habitation; in faith now, and in fruition ſhortly. It is the unſpeakable comfort of all God's faithful ſubjects, not only that he doth reign univerſally, and with an unconteſtable ſovereignty; but that he will reign eternally, and there ſhall be no end of his dominion.

Ver. 22—27. God can imbitter that to us which we promiſe ourſelves moſt ſatisfaction from; and often doth ſo in the wilderneſs of this world, that our wants and diſappointments in the creature may drive us to the Creator, in whoſe favour alone true comfort is to be had.

The greateſt joys and hopes are ſoon turned into the greateſt griefs and fears with them that live by ſenſe only, and not by faith.

It is the greateſt relief of the cares of magiſtrates and miniſters, when thoſe under their charge make them uneaſy, that they may have recourſe to God by prayer. He is the guide of the church's guides, and to the chief ſhepherd the under ſhepherds muſt upon all occaſions apply themſelves.

God directed Moſes to a tree which he caſt into the waters, and all of a ſudden they were made ſweet.

God is to be acknowledged, not only in the creating of things uſeful for man, but in diſcovering their uſefulneſs. Some make this tree typical of the croſs of Chriſt, which ſweetens the bitter waters of affliction to all the faithful, and enables them to rejoice in tribulation. The Jewiſh tradition is, that

the wood of this tree was itſelf bitter, yet it ſweetened the waters of Marah: the bitterneſs of Chriſt's ſufferings and death alters the property of ours.

God can find places of refreſhment for his people even in the wilderneſs of this world, wells in the valley of Baca, leſt they ſhould faint in their mind with a perpetual fatigue: yet whatever our delights may be in the land of our pilgrimage, we muſt remember that we do but encamp by them for a time, for here we have no continuing city.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1—12. Experiences of God's mercies greatly aggravate our diſtruſts and murmurings.

When we begin to fret and be uneaſy, we ought to conſider, that God hears all our murmurings, though only murmurings of the heart. When we murmur againſt thoſe who are inſtruments of any uneaſineſs to us, whether juſtly or unjuſtly, we ſhould do well to conſider how much we reflect upon God by it: men are but God's hand. They that quarrel with the reproofs and convictions of the word, and are angry at their miniſters, when they are touched in a tender part, know not what they do, for therein they ſtrive with their Maker. Let this forever ſtop the mouth of murmuring—that it is a daring impiety to murmur at God, becauſe he is God; and groſs abſurdity to murmur at men, becauſe they are but men.

What God's miniſters ſay to us is then likely to do us good, when the glory of God ſhines in with it upon our ſouls.

Ver. 13—21. God's bounty leaves room for man's duty; it did ſo even when manna was rained: they muſt not eat till they have gathered.

Ver. 22—31. God is jealous for the honour of his ſabbaths. If walking out to ſeek for food on the ſabbath were thus reproved, walking out purely to find our own pleaſure on that day cannot be juſtified.

Ver. 32—36. Eaten bread muſt not be forgotten. God's miracles and mercies are to be had in everlaſting remembrance for our encouragement to truſt in him at all times.

They that did eat manna hungred again, died at laſt, and with many of them God was not well pleaſed; whereas, they that feed on Chriſt by faith, ſhall never hunger, and ſhall die no more, and with them God will be for ever well pleaſed. The Lord evermore give us this bread!

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1—7. It is a great provocation to God for us to queſtion his preſence, providence, or promiſe; eſpecially for his Iſrael to do it, who are ſo much obliged to truſt him.

Let Moſes's ſtriking of the rock with his rod, and

the waters coming out of it in conſequence of his ſo doing, direct us to live in a dependance,

1. Upon God's providence, even in the greateſt ſtraights and difficulties. God can open fountains for our ſupply where we leaſt expect them. Thoſe who in this wilderneſs keep to God's way, may truſt him to provide for them.

2. Upon Chriſt's grace; *that rock was* Chriſt, 1 Cor. x. 4. The graces and comforts of the Spirit are compared to rivers of living water, John vii. 38, 39.—iv. 14. Theſe flow from Chriſt, who is the rock ſmitten by the law of Moſes, for he was made under the law. Nothing will ſupply the needs and ſatisfy the deſires of a ſoul, but water out of this rock, this fountain opened.

Ver. 8—16. God is to be truſted in the uſe of means. It tends much to the encouragement of faith, to reflect upon the great things God has done for us, and review the monuments of his favour.

Obſerve, 1. How Moſes was tired, *his hands were heavy*. We do not find that Joſhua's hands were heavy in fighting, but Moſes's hands were heavy in praying. The more ſpiritual any ſervice is, the more apt we are to fail and flag in it. Praying work, if done with due intention of mind and vigour of affection, will be found hard work; and though the ſpirit be willing to it, the fleſh will be weak. Our great interceſſor in heaven fainteth not, neither is weary, though he attends continually to this very thing.

2. What influence the rod of Moſes had upon the battle: *when Moſes held up his hand, Iſrael prevailed*, but *when* he let down his hand, *Amalek prevailed.*

Note, the church's cauſe is ordinarily more or leſs ſucceſsful, according as the church's friends are more or leſs ſtrong in faith and fervent in prayer.

No doubt it was a great encouragement to the people to ſee Joſhua before them in the field of battle, and Moſes above them upon the top of the hill. Chriſt is both to us, our Joſhua, the captain of our ſalvation that fights our battles, and our Moſes, who in the upper world ever lives making interceſſion that our faith fail not.

Amalek's deſtruction was typical of the deſtruction of all the enemies of Chriſt and his kingdom. Whoever *make war with the Lamb*, the Lamb will overcome them.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 7—12. Though Moſes was a prophet of the Lord, a great prophet, and king in Jeſhurun, yet he ſhewed a very humble reſpect to his father-in-law. However God in his providence is pleaſed to advance us, we muſt make conſcience of giving honour to whom honour is due, and never look with diſdain upon our poor relations.

Whatever we have the joy of, God muſt have the praiſe of.

Mutual friendſhip is ſanctified by joint-worſhip.

It is a very good thing for relations and friends when they come together, to join in the ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe, as thoſe that meet in Chriſt, the center of unity.

Ver. 13—26. There may be overdoing even in well-doing, and therefore our zeal muſt always be governed by diſcretion, that our good may not be evil ſpoken of. Wiſdom is profitable to direct, that we may neither content ourſelves with leſs than our duty, nor over-taſk ourſelves with that which is beyond our ſtrength.

The fear of God is that principle which will beſt fortify man againſt all temptations to injuſtice, Neh. v. 15. Gen. xlii. 18.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1.—8. In all our dealings with God, free grace preſents us with the bleſſings of goodneſs, and all our comfort is owing not to our knowing God, but rather to our being *known of him*, Gal. iv. 9. *We love him*, viſit him, and covenant with him, *becauſe he firſt loved us*, viſited us, and covenanted with us. God is the Alpha, and therefore muſt be the Omega.

Some have well obſerved, that the Old Teſtament Church is ſaid to be borne upon eagles' wings; noting the power of that diſpenſation, which was carried on with *an high hand and an out-ſtretched arm*; but the New Teſtament Church is ſaid to be ga-

thered by the Lord Jeſus, *as a hen gathers her chickens under wings*; Matth. xxiii. 37. noting the grace and compaſſion of that diſpenſation, and the admirable condeſcenſion and humiliation of the redeemer.

Moſes, as a mediator, returned the words of the people to God. Thus Chriſt, the mediator between us and God, as a prophet, reveals God's will to us, his precepts and promiſes, and then, as a prieſt, offers up to God our ſpiritual ſacrifices, not only of prayer and praiſe, but of devout affections, and pious reſolutions; the work of his own Spirit in us. Thus he is that bleſſed *days-man who lays his hand upon us both.*

Ver. 16—25. In divine things we muſt not covet to know more than God would have us know; and he has allowed us as much as is good for us. A deſire of forbidden knowledge was the ruin of our firſt parents.

Thoſe that would be wiſe above what is written, and intrude into thoſe things which they have not ſeen, need this admonition, that they *break not through to gaze.*

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1—11. Pride makes a god of ſelf, covetouſneſs makes a god of money, ſenſuality makes a god of the belly; whatever is eſteemed and loved, feared or ſerved, delighted in, or depended on, more than God, that we do in effect make a god of.

Ver. 12—17. As religion towards God is an eſſential branch of univerſal righteouſneſs, ſo righteouſneſs towards men is an eſſential branch of true religion. Godlineſs and honeſty muſt go together.

Ver. 22—26. The Iſraelites are aſſured of God' gracious acceptance of their devotions, wherever they were paid, according to his will. *In all places where I record my name*, or where my name is recorded, *i. e.* where I am worſhipped in ſincerity, *I will come unto thee*, and will bleſs thee. Afterwards God choſe one particular place, wherein to record his name, but that being taken away now under the Goſpel, when men are willed to pray every where, this promiſe revives in its full extent, that wherever God's people meet in his name to worſhip him, *he will be in the midſt of them.* He will honour them with his preſence, and reward them with the gifts of his grace: there he will come unto them and will bleſs them, and more than this we need not deſire for the beautifying of our ſolemn aſſemblies.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1—11. If thoſe that have had power over us have been injurious to us, that will not in the leaſt excuſe us if we be in the like manner injurious to thoſe that are under our power; but will rather aggravate it, becauſe in that caſe we may the eaſier put our ſoul into their ſoul's ſtead.

Ver. 12—21. The undutiful behaviour of chil-

dren towards their parents, is a very great provocation to God our common father, and if men do not puniſh it, he will. Thoſe are perfectly loſt to all virtue, and abandoned to all wickedneſs, that have broke through the bonds of filial reverence and duty to ſuch a degree, as in word or action to abuſe their own parents.

Ver. 22—36. It is not enough for us not to do miſchief ourſelves; but we muſt take care that no miſchief be done by thoſe whom it is in our power to reſtrain, whether man or beaſt.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1—6. We ſhould be more careful not to do wrong, than not to ſuffer wrong, becauſe to ſuffer wrong is only an affliction, but to do wrong is a ſin, and ſin is always worſe than affliction.

Ver. 7—15. The religion of an oath is very antient, and a plain indication of the univerſal belief of a God, a providence, and a judgment to come.

Ver. 16—24. Note, 1. Humanity is one of the laws of religion, and obligeth us particularly to be tender of thoſe that lie moſt under diſadvantages and diſcouragements; and extend our compaſſionate concern to ſtrangers, and thoſe that we are not obliged to by alliance or acquaintance.

2. Thoſe that profeſs religion ſhould ſtudy to oblige ſtrangers, that they may thereby recommend religion to their good opinion, and take heed of

doing any thing that may tempt them to think ill of it, or its profeſſors, 1 Pet. ii. 12.

3. Thoſe that have themſelves been in poverty and diſtreſs, if providence enrich and enlarge them, ought to ſhew a particular tenderneſs towards thoſe that are now in ſuch circumſtances as they were in formerly, doing now to them as they then wiſhed to be done by.

It is a great comfort to thoſe who are injured and oppreſſed by men, that they have a God to go to, who will do more than *give them the hearing*; and it ought to be a terror to thoſe who are oppreſſive, that they have the cry of the poor againſt them, which God will hear.

Ver. 25—31. God is the firſt and beſt, and therefore muſt have the firſt and beſt.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1—9. That which we tranſlate, Thou ſhalt not *raiſe*, the margin reads, Thou ſhalt not *receive a falſe report*; for ſometimes the receiver, in this caſe, is as bad as the thief; and a backbiting tongue would not do ſo much miſchief as it doth, if it were not countenanced. Sometimes we cannot avoid hearing a falſe report, but we muſt not receive it, *i. e.* we muſt not hear it with pleaſure and delight, as thoſe that rejoice in iniquity; nor give credit to it, as long as there remains any cauſe to queſtion the

truth of it. This is charity to our neighbour's good name, and doing as we would be done by.

Ver. 10—19. If we be prudent and diligent in our affairs, we may truſt providence to furniſh us with the bread of the day, in its day.

Ver. 20—33. The wiſdom of God is to be obſerved in the gradual advances of the church's intereſts. It is in real kindneſs to the church, that its enemies are ſubdued by little and little, for thus we are kept upon our guard, and in a continual dependance upon God. Corruptions are thus driven out of the hearts of God's people; not all at once, leſt they ſhould grow proud and ſecure, but by little and little: the old man is crucified, and therefore dies ſlowly.

Thoſe that would be kept from ill courſes, muſt keep from ill company. It is dangerous living in a bad neighbourhood: others ſins will be our ſnares, if we look not well to ourſelves. We muſt always look upon our greateſt danger to be from thoſe that would make us ſin againſt God. Whatever friendſhip is pretended, that is really our worſt enemy that draws us from our duty.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1—8. Our Lord Jeſus, the mediator of the new covenant, (of whom Moſes was a type) having offered up himſelf a ſacrifice upon the croſs, that his blood might be indeed the blood of the covenant,

he ſprinkled it upon the altar in his interceſſion, Heb. ix. 12. and ſprinkles it upon his church by his word and ordinances, and the influences and operations of the Spirit of promiſe, by whom we are ſealed.

Ver. 12—18. Joſhua was a type of Chriſt, and (as the learned Biſhop Pearſon well obſerves) Moſes takes him with him into the mount, becauſe without Jeſus, in whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, there is no looking into the ſecrets of heaven, nor approaching the glorious preſence of God.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1—9. The Scripture is deſigned to direct us in our duty, not to fill our heads with ſpeculations, or pleaſe our fancies.

The beſt uſe we can make of our worldly wealth, is to honour God with it in works of piety and charity.

When we have been bleſſed with ſome remarkable ſucceſs in our affairs, and have had, as we ſay, a good hit, it may be juſtly expected that we ſhould do ſomething more than ordinary for the glory of God, conſecrating our gain in ſome reaſonable proportion of it to the Lord of the whole earth, Micah iv. 13.

We muſt own that we have our all from God's bounty, and therefore ought to uſe all for his glory. Since we live *upon* him, we muſt live *to* him. He

that gave us no account of the lines and circles of the globe, the diameter of the earth, or the height and magnitude of the ſtars, has told us particularly the meaſure of every board and curtain of the tabernacle; for God's church and inſtituted religion is more precious to him, and more conſiderable than all the reſt of the world. And the ſcriptures were written not to deſcribe to us the works of nature, a general view of which is ſufficient to lead us to the knowledge and ſervice of the Creator; but to acquaint us with the methods of grace, and thoſe things which are purely matters of divine revela tion.

Ver. 10—22. It is obſervable,

1. That the tables of the law were carefully preſerved in an ark for the purpoſe, to teach us to make much of the word of God, and to hide it in our hearts, in our innermoſt thoughts, as the ark was placed in the holy of holies. It intimates likewiſe the care which divine providence ever did, and ever will take, to preſerve the records of divine revelation in the church, ſo that even in the latter days there ſhall be ſeen in his temple *the ark of his teſtament*. See Rev. xi. 19.

2. That this ark was the chief token of God's preſence; which teacheth us, that the firſt and great evidence and aſſurance of God's favour, is the putting of his law in the heart. God dwells where that rules, Heb. viii. 10.

3. That proviſion was made for the carrying of

this ark about with them in all their removes; which intimates to us, that wherever we go we ſhould take our religion along with us, *always bearing about with us*, the love of the Lord Jeſus and his law.

The mercy ſeat was the covering of the ark or cheſt, made of ſolid gold, exactly to fit the dimenſions of the ark. This propitiatory covering, as it might well be tranſlated, was a type of Chriſt, the great propitiation, whoſe ſatisfaction fully anſwers the demands of the law, covers our tranſgreſſions, and comes between us and the curſe we deſerve. Thus he is the *end of the law for righteouſneſs*.

Ver. 31—40. There is in the midſt of the inſtructions given by God to Moſes, a caution given to him, to take heed of varying from his model; *make them after the pattern ſhewn thee*. Nothing was left to his own invention, or the fancy of the workmen, or the people's humour; but the will of God muſt be religiouſly obſerved in every particular. Thus,

1. All God's providences are exactly according to his councils, and the copy never varies from the original. Infinite wiſdom never changeth its meaſures, whatever is purpoſed, ſhall undoubtedly be performed.

2. All his ordinances muſt be adminiſtered according to his inſtitutions. Chriſt's inſtruction to his diſciples, Matth. xxviii. 20. is like this here, *Obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you*.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 1—6. The houſe muſt be a tabernacle or tent, ſuch as ſoldiers now uſe in the camp, which was both a mean dwelling and a moveable one; and yet the ark of God had no better, till Solomon built the temple four hundred and eighty years after this, 1 Kings vi. 1. God manifeſted his preſence among them thus in a tabernacle,

1. In compliance with their preſent condition in the wilderneſs, that they might have him with them wherever they went.

Note, God ſuits the tokens of his favour, and the gifts of his grace, to his people's wants and neceſſities, according as they are, accommodating his mercy to their ſtate, proſperous or adverſe, ſettled or unſettled.

2. That it might repreſent the ſtate of God's church in this world, it is *a tabernacle ſtate*, Pſalm xv. 1. *We have here no continuing city*, being ſtrangers in this world, and travellers towards a better: we ſhall never be fixed till we come to heaven. Church privileges are moveable goods from one place to another. The goſpel is not tied to any place. The candleſtick is in a tent, and may eaſily be taken away, Rev. ii. 5. If we make much of the tabernacle, and improve the privilege of it, wherever we go it will accompany us; but if we neglect and diſgrace it, wherever we ſtay it will for-

ſake us. What hath my beloved to do in my houſe? Jer. xi. 15.

Ver. 7—14. Obſerve, That the out-ſide of the tabernacle was courſe and rough, the beauty of it was in the inner curtains. Thoſe in whom God dwells muſt labour to be better than they ſeem to be. Hypocrites put the beſt ſide outward, like *whited ſepulchres*; but *the king's daughter is all glorious within*, Pſalm. xlv. 13.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1—8. This brazen altar was a type of Chriſt dying to make atonement for our ſins. The wood had been conſumed by the fire from heaven, if it had not been ſecured by the braſs; nor could the human nature of Chriſt have born the wrath of God, if it had not been ſupported by a divine power. Chriſt ſanctified himſelf for his church as their altar, John xvii. 19. and by his mediation ſanctifies the daily ſacrifices of his people, who alſo have *a right to eat of this altar*, Heb. xiii. 10. for they ſerve at it as ſpiritual prieſts. To the horns of this altar poor ſinners fly for refuge when juſtice purſues them, and there they are ſafe in the virtue of the ſacrifice there offered.

Ver. 9—19. Before the tabernacle there was to be a court or yard, incloſed with hangings of the fineſt linen that was uſed for tents. This court was a type of the church, incloſed and diſtinguiſhed

from the reſt of the world. The incloſure ſupported by pillars, noting the ſtability of the church, hung with the clean linen, which is ſaid to be the *righteouſneſs of ſaints*, Rev. xix. 8. Theſe were the courts David longed for, and coveted to reſide in, Pſalm lxxxiv. 2, 10. and into which the people of God entered with praiſe and thankſgiving, Pſalm c. 4. yet this court would contain but a few worſhippers. Thanks be to God, now under the goſpel, the incloſure is taken down. God's will is that men *pray every where*; and there is room for all that in every place call on the name of Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 1—5. Eminency, even in common arts, is a gift of God, it comes from him, and as there is occaſion, it ought to be uſed for him.

The high prieſt had the names of the tribes both on his ſhoulders and on his breaſt, noting both the power and the love, with which our Lord Jeſus intercedes for thoſe that are his. He not only bears them up in his arms with an almighty ſtrength, but he bears them *upon his heart*, as the expreſſion here is, *carries them in his boſom*, Iſa. xl. 11. with the moſt tender affection. How near ſhould Chriſt's name be to our hearts, ſince he is pleaſed to lay our names ſo near his! and what a comfort is it to us in all our addreſſes to God, that the great high prieſt of our profeſſion, has the names of all his Iſrael

upon his breaſt before the Lord, *for a memorial*, preſenting them to God, as the people of his choice, who were to be made *accepted in the beloved!*

Ver. 15—30. *Urim* and *Thummim*, ſignify light and integrity. This oracle was of great uſe to Iſrael. It was a ſhadow of good things to come, and the ſubſtance is Chriſt. He is our oracle: by him God in theſe laſt days makes known himſelf and his mind to us, Heb. i. 1. John i. 18. Divine revelation centres in him, and comes to us through him. He is the light, the true light, the faithful witneſs, the truth itſelf, and from him we receive the Spirit of truth, who leads into all truth.

Ver. 31—39. All that attend in God's houſe, muſt have *Holineſs to the Lord* engraven upon their foreheads, *i. e.* they muſt be holy, devoted to the Lord, and deſigning his glory in all they do. This muſt appear in their forehead, in an open profeſſion of their relation to God, as thoſe that are not aſhamed to own it, and in a converſation in the world anſwerable to it.

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1—37. All that are to be employed for God, are to be ſanctified to him. The perſon muſt firſt be accepted, and then the performance.

Ver. 38—46. A lamb was to be offered upon the altar every morning, and a lamb every evening; each with a meat-offering, and both made by fire,

as a *continual burnt offering* throughout their generations.

Now, 1. This typified the continual interceſſion which Chriſt ever lives to make, in virtue of his ſatisfaction, for the continual ſanctification of his church. Though he offered himſelf *once for all*, yet that one offering thus becomes a continual offering.

2. This teacheth us to offer up to God the ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe, every day, morning and evening, in humble acknowledgment of our dependance upon him, and our obligations to him. Our daily devotions muſt be looked upon as the moſt needful of our daily works, and the moſt pleaſant of our daily comforts. Whatever buſineſs we have, this muſt never be omitted, either morning or evening. Prayer-time muſt be kept up as duly as meat time. The daily ſacrifices were as daily meals in God's houſe, and therefore they were always attended with bread and wine. Thoſe ſtarve their own ſouls that keep not up a conſtant attendance on the throne of grace.

God will not fail to give thoſe the meeting, who diligently and conſcientiouſly attend upon him in the ordinances of his own appointment.

Where God ſets up the tabernacle of his ordinances, he will himſelf dwell. *Lo! I am with you always*, Matth. xxviii. 20. Thoſe that abide in God's houſe, he will abide with them.

Thoſe are truly happy that have a covenant in-

tereſt in God as theirs, and the comfortable evidence of that intereſt. If we have this we have enough, and need no more to make us happy.

CHAP. XXX.

Ver. 1—10. As by the offerings on the brazen altar, ſatisfaction was made for what had been done diſpleaſing to God, ſo, by the offering on this altar of incenſe, what they did well, was as it were recommended to the divine acceptance; for our two great concerns with God are to be acquitted from guilt, and accepted as righteous in his ſight.

This incenſe altar typified,

1. The mediation of Chriſt. The brazen altar in the court, was a type of Chriſt dying on earth; the golden altar in the ſanctuary, was a type of Chriſt interceding in heaven, in virtue of his ſatisfaction.

2. The devotions of the ſaints, whoſe prayers are ſaid to be ſet forth before God as incenſe, Pſalm cxli. 2.

Ver. 11—16. The tribute to be paid for the ranſom of the ſoul, was half a ſhekel, about fifteenpence of our money. The rich were not to give more nor the poor leſs; to intimate that the ſouls of the rich and poor were alike precious. In other offerings men were to give according to their ability, but this, which was the *ranſom of the ſoul*, muſt be alike for all; for the rich have as much need of

Chriſt as the poor, and the poor are as welcome to him as the rich. They both alike contributed to the maintenance of the temple ſervice, becauſe both were to have a like intereſt in it, and benefit by it.

Thoſe that have the benefit of God's tabernacle among them, muſt be willing to defray the expences of it; and not grudge the neceſſary charge of God's public worſhip. Thus we muſt honour the Lord with our ſubſtance, and reckon that beſt laid out, which is laid out in the ſervice of God.

CHAP. XXXI.

Ver. 1—11. When God hath work to do, he will never want inſtruments to do it with; for all hearts and heads too, are under his eye, and in his hand; and thoſe may chearfully go about any ſervice for God, and go on in it, who have reaſon to think, that, one way or other, he has called them to it: for whom he calls he will own and bear out.

Note, 1. Skill in common arts and employments is the gift of God; from him is both the faculty and the improvement of the faculty. He teacheth the huſbandman diſcretion, Iſa. xxviii. 26. and the tradeſman too; and he muſt have the praiſe of it.

2. God diſpenſeth his gifts variouſly, one gift to one, another to another, and all for the good of the whole body, both of mankind and of the church. Moſes was fitteſt of all to govern Iſrael; but Bezaleel was fitter than he to build the tabernacle. The

common benefit is very much ſupported by the variety of men's faculties and inclinations. The genius of ſome leads them to be ſerviceable one way, of others another way; and all theſe worketh that one and the ſelf ſame ſpirit, 1 Cor. xii. 11. This forbids pride, envy, and contempt, and ſtrengthens the bond of mutual love.

3. Thoſe whom God calls to any ſervice, he will either find them, or make them fit for it. If God give the commiſſion, he will in ſome meaſure give the qualifications, according as the ſervice is. The work to be done here, was to make the tabernacle, and the utenſils of it, which are here particularly reckoned up. And for this the perſons employed were enabled to *work, in gold, and ſilver, and braſs.*

When Chriſt ſent his apoſtles to rear the goſpel tabernacle, he poured out his Spirit upon them, to enable them to ſpeak with tongues the wonderful works of God; not to work upon metal, but to work upon men; ſo much more excellent were the gifts, as the tabernacle to be pitched, was *a greater and more perfect tabernacle*, as the apoſtle calls it, Heb. ix. 7.

Ver. 12—18. Here is a ſtrict command for the ſanctification of the ſabbath-day. Where no conſcience is made of that, farewell both godlineſs and honeſty; for in the moral law, it ſtands in the midſt between the two tables. Orders were now given that a tabernacle ſhould be ſet up and furniſhed for the ſervice of God, with all poſſible expedition; but leſt

they ſhould think that the nature of the work, and the haſte that was required, would juſtify them in working at it on Sabbath-days, that they might get it done the ſooner, this caution is reaſonably inſerted, *Verily, or nevertheleſs, my Sabbaths ye ſhall keep.* Though they muſt haſten the work, yet they muſt not make more haſte than good ſpeed. They muſt not break the law of the Sabbath in their haſte. Even tabernacle work muſt give way to the Sabbath reſt; ſo jealous is God for the honour of his Sabbaths.

The contempt and profanation of the Sabbath-day is an iniquity to be puniſhed by the judges; and if men do not puniſh it, God will, here or hereafter, unleſs it be repented of.

CHAP. XXXII.

Ver. 1—6. Thoſe that would anticipate God's counſels, are commonly precipitate in their own.

The greateſt merits cannot ſecure men from the greateſt indignities and affronts in this ungrateful world.

Thoſe that are reſolved to think ill, when they have never ſo much reaſon to think well, commonly pretend that they know not what to think.

Short-ſpiritedneſs, and wearineſs in waiting, betrays us to a great many temptations. Iſrael, if they could but have ſtaid one day longer, would have ſeen what was become of Moſes. *The Lord is a God of judgment*, and muſt be waited for till he comes,

waited for though he tarry; and then we ſhall not loſe our labour, for he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry.

Let the readineſs of Iſrael to part with their rings to make an idol of, ſhame us out of our niggardlineſs in the ſervice of the true God. Did they not ſtick at the charge of their idolatry, and ſhall we grudge the expences of our religion, or ſtarve ſo good a cauſe?

Ver. 7—14. It is no reproach to the holineſs of God that he ſuffers ſin to be committed, ſince he knows not only how to reſtrain it when he pleaſeth, but how to make it ſerviceable to the deſigns of his own glory.

The righteous God not only ſees what we do, but what we *are*; not only the actions of our lives, but the diſpoſitions of our ſpirits, and hath an eye to them in all his proceedings.

Ver. 15—20. It is no breach of the law of meekneſs to ſhew our diſpleaſure at the wickedneſs of the wicked. Thoſe are *angry and ſin not*, that are angry at ſin only; not as againſt themſelves, but as againſt God. It becomes us to be cool in our own cauſe, but warm in God's.

Ver. 21—29. We muſt never be drawn into ſin by any thing that men can ſay or do unto us; for it will not juſtify us to ſay that we were ſo drawn in. Men can but tempt us to ſin, they cannot force us.

Aaron extenuates and conceals his own ſhare in the ſin of the molten calf, as if he had only bid them

break off their gold that they had about them, and childiſhly inſinuates that when he caſt the gold into the fire, it came out in this ſhape; but not a word of his graving and faſhioning it. But Moſes relates to all ages what he did, though he himſelf here would not own it.

Note, *He that covers his ſin ſhall not proſper*, for ſooner or later it will be diſcovered. Well, this was all Aaron had to ſay for himſelf; and he had better have ſaid nothing, for his defence did but aggravate his offence; and yet he is not only ſpared, but preferred; as ſin did abound, grace did much more abound.

Ver. 30—35. All private intereſts muſt be poſtponed to the good and welfare of communities. The matter is not great what comes of us and our families in this world, ſo it go well with the church of God, and there be peace upon Iſrael. Many that are not preſently cut off in their ſins, are reſerved for a farther day of reckoning: vengeance is ſlow, but ſure.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Ver. 1—6. Thoſe whom God pardons muſt be made to know what their ſin deſerved; and how miſerable they had been if they had been unpardoned; that God's mercy may be the more magnified.

Ver. 7—11. If our hearts go forth towards God to meet him, he will graciouſly come down to meet us.

Ver. 12—23. A divine conduct is one of the beſt evidences of divine favour. By this we may know that we *find grace in God's ſight*, if we find grace in our hearts to guide and quicken us in the way of our duty. God's good work in us is the ſureſt diſcovery of his good-will towards us.

Thoſe who know how to value God's favours, are beſt prepared to receive them. God's gracious promiſes, and the advances of mercy towards us, ſhould not only encourage our faith, but excite our fervency in prayer. God's ſpecial preſence with us here in this wilderneſs, by his Spirit and Grace, to direct, defend, and comfort us, is the ſureſt pledge of his ſpecial love to us, and will redound to his glory as well as our benefit.

All that are effectually called into the knowledge of God, and fellowſhip with him, though they deſire nothing *more than God*, yet they are ſtill coveting more and more of him, till they come to ſee as they are ſeen.

God's goodneſs is his glory; and he will have us to know him by the glory of his mercy, more than by the glory of his majeſty; for we muſt fear even the *Lord and his goodneſs*, Hoſ. iii. 5.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Ver. 1—4. Moſes roſe up early to go to the place appointed, to ſhew how forward he was to preſent himſelf before God, and loth to loſe time. It is

good to be early at our devotions. The morning is perhaps as good a friend to the Graces, as it is to the Muſes.

Ver. 5—9. God's greatneſs and goodneſs illuſtrate and ſet off each other. That the terror of his greatneſs may not make us afraid, we are told how good he is; and that we may not preſume upon his goodneſs, we are told how great he is.

God is abundant in goodneſs and truth. This ſpeaks plentiful goodneſs: it abounds above our deſerts, above our conception, and expreſſion. The ſprings of mercy are always full; the ſtreams of mercy always flowing. There is mercy enough in God, enough for all, enough for each, enough for ever.

Ver. 18—27. Note, 1, All hearts are in God's hands and under his check. He can not only lay a reſtraint upon men's actions, but upon their deſires. Canaan was a deſirable land, and the neighbouring nations were greedy enough; and yet God ſaith, they ſhall not deſire it. Let us check all ſinful deſires in our own hearts againſt God and his glory; and then truſt him to check all ſinful deſires in the hearts of others againſt us and our intereſt.

2. The way of duty is the way of ſafety. If we ſerve God, he will preſerve us, and thoſe that venture for him, ſhall never loſe by him.

Ver. 28—35. Obſerve, That Moſes himſelf *wiſt not that the ſkin of his face ſhone.* Thus,

1. It is the infelicity of ſome that their faces ſhine

in true grace, and yet they do not know it, to take the comfort of it. Others ſee much of God in them, but they themſelves are ready to think they have no grace.

2. It is the humility of others, that their faces ſhine in eminent gifts and uſefulneſs, and yet they do not know it, to be puffed up with it.

Whatever beauty God puts upon us, we ſhould ſtill be filled with ſuch an humble ſenſe of our own unworthineſs and manifold infirmities, as will make us even overlook and forget that which makes our faces ſhine.

CHAP. XXXV.

Ver. 20—29. What duty God convinceth us of, and calls us to, we ſhould ſet about it ſpeedily. No ſeaſon will be more convenient than the preſent ſeaſon.

What we give and do for God is then acceptable, when it comes from a good principle in the heart and ſpirit.

The offerings that were brought for the ſervice of the tabernacle, were of divers kinds, according as they had. Thoſe that had gold and precious ſtones brought them; not thinking any thing too good and too rich to part with for the honour of God. Thoſe that had not precious ſtones to bring, brought goats' hair, and rams' ſkins.—If we cannot do as much as others for God, we muſt not therefore ſit

ſtill and do nothing. If the meaner offerings, which are according to our ability, gain us not ſuch a reputation among men; yet they ſhall not fail of acceptance with God, who requires *according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not*, 2 Cor. viii. 12. Two mites from a pauper, were more pleaſing than ſo many talents from a Dives. God hath an eye to the heart of the giver, more than to the value of the gift.

Even thoſe that are not in a capacity to give in charity, may yet work in charity; and thus the poor may relieve the poor; and thoſe that have nothing but their limbs and ſenſes may be very charitable in the labour of love.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Ver. 1—7. When God had qualified Bezaleel and Aholiab for the work of the tabernacle, they applied themſelves to it without delay. The talents we are entruſted with, muſt not be laid up, but laid out; not hid in a napkin, but traded with.

Thoſe are to be called to the building of the goſpel tabernacle, whom God has by his grace made in ſome meaſure fit for the work, and free to it. Ability and willingneſs are the two things to be regarded in the call of miniſters.

Ver. 8—13. There is a beauty in holineſs. The curtains of the tabernacle were embroidered; ſo is the church adorned with the gifts and graces

of the Spirit, that raiment of needle-work, Pſalm xlv. 14.

Ver. 35—38. There was a vail made for a partition between the holy place, and the moſt holy. This ſignified the darkneſs and diſtance of that diſpenſation, compared with the New Teſtament, which ſhews us the glory of God more clearly, and invites us to draw near to it: and the darkneſs and diſtance of our preſent ſtate, in compariſon with heaven, where we ſhall be *ever with the Lord*, and *ſee him as he is*.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Ver. 10—24. God is a good houſeholder, that always keeps a plentiful table. Is the world his tabernacle? His providence in it ſpreads a table for all the creatures. He *provideth food for all fleſh*. Is the church his tabernacle? His grace in it ſpreads a table for all believers, furniſhed with the bread of life.

The candleſtick in the tabernacle, which was not of wood overlaid with gold, but all beaten work of pure gold only, ſignified that light of divine revelation with which God's church upon earth (which is his tabernacle among men) hath always been enlightened; being always ſupplied with freſh oil from Chriſt the good olive, Zech. iv. 2, 3.

God's manifeſtations of himſelf in this world are but candle-light, compared with the day-light of

the future ſtate. The Bible is a golden candleſtick, it is of pure gold, Pſalm xix. 10. From it light is diffuſed to every part of God's tabernacle, that by it his ſpiritual prieſts may ſee to miniſter unto the Lord, and to do the ſervice of his ſanctuary. This candleſtick has not only its bowls for neceſſary uſe, but its knops and flowers for ornament. Many things which God ſaw fit to beautify his word with, we can no more give a reaſon for, than for theſe knops and flowers; and yet muſt be ſure they were added for good purpoſe. Let us bleſs God for this candleſtick, have an eye to it continually, and dread the removal of it out of its place.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Ver. 1--8. The court of the tabernacle was furniſhed with a laver, to hold water for the prieſts to waſh in, when they went in to miniſter. This ſignified the proviſion that it made in the goſpel of Chriſt, for the cleanſing of our ſouls from the moral pollution of ſin by the merit and grace of Chriſt; that we may be fit to ſerve the holy God in holy duties.

Uſually, the more particular we are in the confeſſion of ſin, the more comfort we have in the ſenſe of pardon.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Ver. 1—31. The prieſt's garments are here called *clothes of ſervice*. Note, Thoſe that wear robes of honour muſt look upon them as clothes of ſervice; for thoſe upon whom honour is put, from them ſervice is expected. It is ſaid of thoſe that are arrayed in white robes, that they *are before the throne of God, and ſerve him day and night in his temple*, Rev. vii. 13, 15. Holy garments were not made for men to ſleep in, or to ſtrut in; but to do ſervice in: and then they are indeed for glory and beauty.

The prieſts' garments were all ſhadows of good things to come; but the ſubſtance is Chriſt, and the grace of the goſpel.

Note, 1. Chriſt is our great high-prieſt. He put upon him the clothes of ſervice, when he undertook the work of our redemption: arrayed himſelf with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which he received not by meaſure: Girded himſelf with the girdle of reſolution, to go through with his undertaking: Charged himſelf with all God's ſpiritual Iſrael, bare them on his ſhoulders, carried them in his boſom, laid them near his heart, engraved them on the palms of his hands, and preſented them in the breaſt-plate of judgment unto his Father: And (laſtly) he crowned himſelf with *holineſs to the Lord*, conſecrating his whole undertaking to the honour of his Father's holineſs.

2. True believers are ſpiritual prieſts. The clean linen with which all their clothes of ſervice muſt be made, is *the righteouſneſs of ſaints*, Rev. xix. 8. *and holineſs to the Lord*, muſt be ſo written upon their foreheads, that all who converſe with them may ſee and ſay, that they bear the image of God's holineſs, and are devoted to the praiſe of it.

Ver. 32—43. God's work muſt be done in every thing according to his own will. His inſtitutions neither need, nor admit men's inventions, to make them either more beautiful, or more likely to anſwer the intention of them. God is pleaſed with willing worſhip, but not with will-worſhip.

CHAP. XL.

Ver. 1—15. The tabernacle happening to be ſet up *on the firſt day of the firſt month*, intimates that it is good to begin the year with ſome good work. When a new year begins, we ſhould think of ſerving God more and better than we did the year before.

Ver. 16—33. When the tabernacle and the furniture of it were prepared, they did not put off the rearing of it till they came to Canaan, though they now hoped to be there very ſhortly; but in obedience to the will of God, they ſet it up in the midſt of their camp, while they were in the wilderneſs. Thoſe that are unſettled in this world, muſt not think that will excuſe them in their continued irre-

ligion; as if it were time enough to begin to ſerve God, when they begin to be ſettled in the world: No; a tabernacle for God is a very needful and profitable companion even in a wilderneſs, eſpecially conſidering that our carcaſes may fall in that wilderneſs, and we may be fixed in another world, before we come to fix in this.

Ver. 34—38. As before the tabernacle was ſet up, the Iſraelites had the cloud for their guide, which appeared ſometimes in one place, and ſometimes in another; but from henceforward reſted on the tabernacle, and was to be found there only; ſo the church had divine revelation for its guide from the firſt, before the ſcriptures were written; but ſince the making up of that canon, it reſts in that as its tabernacle, and there only is it to be found.

LEVITICUS.

CHAPTER I. VER. 1, 2.

THE tabernacle was ſet up to be a place of communion between God and Iſrael: where they performed their ſervices to God; God revealed his will to them. Thus by the word and prayer we now have fellowſhip with the Father, and with his ſon Jeſus Chriſt, Acts vi. 4. When we ſpeak to God we muſt deſire to hear from him, and reckon it a great favour that he is pleaſed to ſpeak to us.

Ver. 3—9. If a man were rich and could afford it, it is ſuppoſed that he would bring his burnt-ſacrifice, with which he deſigned to honour God, out of his herd of larger cattle. He that conſiders that God is the beſt of beings, will reſolve to give him the beſt he has, elſe he gives him not the glory due unto his name.

Ver. 10—17. Thoſe of the middle rank, that could not well afford to offer a bullock, would bring a ſheep or a goat; and thoſe who were not able to do that, ſhould be accepted of God, if they brought a turtle-dove, or pigeon; for God in his law, and in his goſpel, as well as in his providence, conſiders the poor. It is obſervable, that thoſe creatures were choſen for ſacrifice, which were moſt mild and gen-

tle, harmleſs and inoffenſive; to typify the innocency and meekneſs that was in Chriſt, and to teach the innocency and meekneſs that ſhould be in Chriſtians. The poor man's turtle-doves or young pigeons are ſaid to be an offering of a ſweet ſmelling-ſavour, as much as that of an ox or bullock. Yet after all, *to love God with all our heart*, and to *love our neighbour as ourſelves*, is *better than all burnt-offerings and ſacrifices*, Matth. xii. 33.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1—10. The law of meat-offerings was appointed, 1. In condeſcenſion to the poor, and their ability, that they who themſelves lived only upon bread and cakes, might offer an acceptable offering to God, out of that which was their own coarſe and homely fare; and by making for God's altar, as the widow of Sarepata for his prophet, a little cake firſt, might procure ſuch a bleſſing upon the handful of meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruſe, as that it may not fail.

2. As a proper acknowledgement of the mercy of God to them in their food. This was like a quit-rent, by which they teſtified their dependence upon God, their thankfulneſs to him, and their expectations from him, as their owner and bountiful benefactor, who giveth to all life and breath and food convenient. Thus muſt they honour their Lord with their ſubſtance, and in token of their eating and

drinking to his glory, muſt conſecrate ſome of their meat and drink to his immediate ſervice. They that now, with a grateful charitable heart, deal out their bread to the hungry, and provide for the neceſſities of thoſe that are deſtitute of daily food, and when they eat the fat and drink the ſweet themſelves, ſend portions to them for whom nothing is prepared; theſe offer unto God an acceptable meat-offering.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1—5. The burnt-offerings having regard to God, as in himſelf the beſt of beings, moſt perfect and excellent, were purely expreſſive of adoration, and therefore were wholly burned: but the peace-offerings had regard to God as a benefactor to his creatures, and the giver of all good things to us, and therefore theſe were divided between the altar, the prieſt, and the owner. Peace ſignifies, reconciliation, concord, and communion: and ſo theſe were called peace-offerings, becauſe in them God and his people did as it were feaſt together, in token of friendſhip.

The prieſt, who was *ordained for men in things pertaining to God*, gave part of this peace-offering to God, burning it upon God's altar; part he gave to the offerer, to be eaten by him with his family and friends; and part he took to himſelf, as the day's-man that laid his hand upon them both.

Chriſt is our peace, our peace-offering; for,

through him alone it is that we can expect to obtain mercy, and an anſwer of peace to our prayers.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1—12. Concerning the ſins for which thoſe offerings, mentioned in this chapter, were appointed, obſerve,

1. They are ſuppoſed to be overt acts; for, had they been to bring a ſacrifice for every ſinful thought or word, it had been endleſs. Atonement was made for thoſe in the groſs, on the day of expiation, once a year.

2. They are ſuppoſed to be ſins of commiſſion, things which ought not to be done.

3. They are ſuppoſed to be ſins committed through ignorance. If they were done preſumptuouſly, and with an avowed contempt of the law, and the law-maker, the offender was to be cut off, and their remained no ſacrifice for the ſin, Heb. x. 26, 27. See Numb. xv. 30.

The law begins with the caſe of the anointed prieſt, that is, the high-prieſt, ſuppoſe he ſin through ignorance; for *the law made men prieſts which had infirmity*. Though his ignorance was of all others leaſt excuſable, yet he is allowed to bring his offering. His office did not ſo far excuſe his offences, as that it ſhould be forgiven him without a ſacrifice; yet it did not ſo far aggravate it, but that it ſhould be forgiven him, when he did bring his ſacrifice.

Ver. 13—21. This is the law for expiating the guilt of a national ſin, by a ſin-offering. If the leaders of the people, through miſtake concerning the law cauſed them to err, when the miſtake was diſcovered, an offering muſt be brought, that wrath might not come upon the whole congregation. Obſerve, it is poſſible that the church may err, and that her guides may miſlead her. It is here ſuppoſed, that the whole congregation may ſin, and ſin through ignorance. God will always have a church on earth, but he never ſaid it ſhould be infallible or perfectly pure from corruption on this ſide heaven.

Ver. 22—26. Obſerve here, that God takes notice of, and is diſpleaſed with the ſins of rulers. They who have power to call others to account, are themſelves accountable to the Ruler of rulers; for as high as they are, there is a Higher than they.

Ver. 27—35. Note, The ſins of ignorance committed by a ſingle perſon, a common obſcure perſon, did require a ſacrifice; for as the greateſt are not above the cenſure, ſo the meaneſt are not below the cognizance of the divine juſtice. None of the common people, if offenders, were overlooked in a crowd.

From all theſe laws concerning the ſin-offerings we may learn

1. To hate ſin, and to watch againſt it. That is certainly a very ill thing, to make atonement for which ſo many innocent and uſeful creatures muſt be ſlain.

2. To value Chriſt, the great and true ſin-offering, whoſe blood cleanſeth from all ſin, which it was not poſſible the *blood of bulls and goats ſhould take away. Now if any man ſin*, Chriſt is *the propitiation*, 1 John ii, 1, 2. not for Jews only, but for Gentiles: and perhaps there was ſome alluſion to this law concerning ſacrifices for ſins of ignorance, in that prayer of Chriſt's juſt when he was offering up himſelf a ſacrifice, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1—6. As ſoon as ever God by his Spirit convinceth our conſciences of any ſin or duty, we muſt preſently ſet in with the conviction, and proſecute it, as thoſe that are not aſhamed to own our former miſtake.

Ver. 7—13. Proviſion is here made for the poor of God's people, and the pacifying of their conſciences under the ſenſe of guilt. Thoſe that were not able to bring a lamb, might bring for a ſin-offering a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; nay, if any were ſo extremely poor, that they were not able to procure thoſe, ſo often as they would have occaſion, they might bring a pottle of fine flour, and that ſhould be accepted. Thus the expence of the ſin-offering, was brought lower than that of any other offering, to teach us that no man's poverty ſhall ever be a bar in the way of his pardon.

Ver. 14—19. Here we have the law concerning thoſe that were properly and peculiarly treſpaſs-offerings, which were offered to atone for treſpaſſes done againſt a neighbour: thoſe ſins we commonly call treſpaſſes.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1—7. Where wrong has been done, reſtitution muſt be made; and till it is made to the utmoſt of our power, or an equivalent accepted by the perſon wronged, we cannot have the comfort of the forgiveneſs of the ſin; for the keeping of what is unjuſtly got, avows the taking; and both together make but one continued act of unrighteouſneſs.

Ver. 14—23 Thoſe whom God hath advanced above others in dignity and power, ought to conſider that he expects more from them than from others; and ſhould take every the leaſt intimation of ſervice to be done for him.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1—10. The more diligent we are in the ſervices of religion, the more we ſhall reap of the advantages of it.

Ver. 11—34. In holy joy and thankſgiving, it is good to have our miniſters go before us, and be our mouth to God. The melody is then ſweet, when he that ſows and they that reap rejoice together.

Ver. 35—38. The ſolemn acts of religious wor-

ſhip are commanded. They are not things that we are left to our liberty in, and which we may do or not do at our pleaſure; but we are under indiſpenſible obligations to perform them in their ſeaſon; and it is at our peril, if we omit them. The obſervance of the laws of Chriſt, cannot be leſs neceſſary than the obſervance of the laws of Moſes.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1—13. It is very fit and of good uſe, that miniſters ſhould be ordained publicly, *plebe præſente**, according to the uſage of the primitive church.

All that miniſter about holy things muſt have an eye to God's command, as their rule and warrant; for it is only in the obſervance of it that they can expect to be owned and accepted of God. Thus we muſt be able to ſay in all acts of religious worſhip, *This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done.*

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1—7. The prieſts had not ſo much as one day's reſpite from ſervice allowed them, that they might divert themſelves, and receive the compliments of their friends upon their elevation; but were buſily employed the very next day, for their conſecration was the *filling of their hands.* God's ſpiritual

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* In the preſence of the people.

prieſts have conſtant work cut out for them, which every day requires; and they that would give up their account with joy muſt redeem time. See Ezek. xliii. 26. God will manifeſt himſelf in the ſolemn aſſemblies of his people and miniſters: and thoſe that would have the benefit and comfort of God's appearances, muſt in them give their attendance.

The high-prieſt made atonement for himſelf, as one that was joined with ſinners; but we have a High-prieſt that was ſeparated from ſinners, and needed it not. When *Meſſiah the prince* was *cut off* as a ſacrifice it was *not for himſelf*, for he knew no ſin.

Ver. 8—22. Our accuſtomed devotions morning and evening alone, and in our families, muſt not be omitted upon any pretence whatſoever; no, not when extraordinary ſervices are to be performed: whatever is added, thoſe muſt not be diminiſhed.

Ver. 23, 24. God's manifeſtations of himſelf, his glory and his grace, are commonly given in anſwer to prayer.

Thoſe that diligently attend upon God in the way he has appointed, ſhall have ſuch a ſight of his glory as ſhall be abundantly to their ſatisfaction.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 3—7. When God corrects us or ours for our ſin, it is our duty to be ſilent under the correction; not to quarrel with God, arraign his juſtice,

or charge him with folly, but to acquieſce in all that God doth.

The moſt effectual arguments to quiet a gracious ſpirit under afflictions, are thoſe that are fetched from God's glory: this ſilenced Aaron. It is true, he is a loſer in his comforts, by this ſevere execution of his two ſons, Nadab and Abihu; but Moſes has ſhewed him that God is a gainer in his glory, and therefore he has not a word to ſay againſt it: if God be ſanctified, Aaron is ſatisfied.

Miniſters and their families are ſometimes exerciſed with ſore trials, that they may be examples of patience and reſignation to God, and may comfort others with that with which they themſelves have been comforted.

The public concerns of God's glory ought to lie nearer our hearts, than any private affections of our own.

The death, eſpecially the ſudden death of others, inſtead of moving our paſſion, ſhould compoſe us into a holy reverence of God, a cautious ſeparation from all ſin, and a ſerious expectation of our own death.

Aaron and his ſons were in danger of being too much affected with the providence, and therefore they are forbidden to mourn: The houſe of Iſrael were in danger of being too little affected with it, and therefore they are commanded to lament.

Thus nature muſt always be governed by grace, according as it needs to be either conſtrained or reſtrained.

Ver. 8—11. Drunkenneſs is bad in any, but it is eſpecially ſcandalous and pernicious in miniſters, who of all men ought to have the cleareſt heads and the cleaneſt hearts.

Thoſe that are addicted to drunkenneſs, are very unfit to teach people God's ſtatutes, both becauſe they that live after the fleſh can have no experimental acquaintance with the things of the Spirit, and becauſe ſuch teachers pull down with one hand what they build up with the other.

Afflictions ſhould rather quicken us *to* our duty than take us off *from* it.

There may be a deep ſenſe of affliction even where there is a ſincere reſignation to the will of God in it.

Our unfitneſs for duty, when it is natural and not ſinful, will have great allowances made for it; and God will have mercy and not ſacrifice.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1—8. Moſt of the meats forbidden as unclean were alſo unwholeſome; and it is not only folly, but ſin againſt God, to prejudice our health for the pleaſing of our appetite.

Ver. 20—42. Ceremonial uncleanneſs continued only till the evening to ſignify that all ceremonial pollutions were to come to an end by the death of Chriſt in the evening of the world.

Ver. 43—47. By having fellowſhip with ſin, which is abominable, we make ourſelves abominable.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 6—8. The morality of this law, concerning the ceremonial uncleanneſs of women in child-birth, obligeth thoſe women that have received mercy from God in child-bearing, with all thankfulneſs to own God's goodneſs to them, acknowledging themſelves unworthy of it, and to *continue in faith and charity, and holineſs with ſobriety*; for this ſhall pleaſe the Lord better than the turtle-doves or the young pigeons.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 18—37. In reading of theſe ſeveral ſorts of ailments, it will be good for us,

1. To lament the calamitous ſtate of human life, which lies expoſed to ſo many grievances. What troops of diſeaſes are we beſet with on every ſide, all which entered into the world by ſin!

2. To give thanks to God, if he has never afflicted us with any of theſe ſores. If the conſtitution be healthful, the body lively and eaſy, we are bound to glorify God with our bodies.

Ver. 38—46. Every one was concerned to avoid the leproſy; and the leper himſelf muſt give notice of the danger. And this was all the law could do, in that it was weak through the fleſh; it taught the leper to cry *unclean, unclean*, but the goſpel has put

another cry into the lepers' mouths, Luke xvii. 12, 13. where we find ten lepers crying with a loud voice, *Jeſus, maſter, have mercy on us.* The law only ſhews us our diſeaſe, the goſpel ſhews us our help in Chriſt.

Ver. 47—59. Sin not only defiles the ſinner's conſcience, but it brings a ſtain upon all his employments and enjoyments, all he has, and all he doth. *To them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure,* Tit. i. 15.

CHAP. XIV.

Some make the ſlain bird to typify Chriſt *dying for our ſins,* and the living bird Chriſt *riſing again for our juſtification:* and the dipping of the living bird in the blood of the ſlain bird, intimated, that the merit of Chriſt's death was that which made his reſurrection effectual for our juſtification. He took his blood with him into the holy place, and there appeared a Lamb as it had been ſlain. The cedar, ſcarlet, and hyſſop, muſt all be dipped in the blood; for the word and ordinances, and all the operations of the Spirit, receive their efficacy for our cleanſing from the blood of Chriſt.

The living bird was to be let looſe in the open field, to ſignify, that the leper being cleanſed, was now no longer under reſtraint and confinement, but might take his liberty to go where he pleaſed. But

this being ſignified by the flight of a bird towards heaven, was an intimation to him henceforward to ſeek the things that are above, and not to ſpend this new life God had reſtored him to merely in the purſuit of earthly things. This typified that glorious liberty of the children of God, which they are advanced to, who through grace are ſprinkled from an evil conſcience.

They whoſe ſouls before *bowed down to the duſt*, Pſalm xliv. 25. in grief and fear, now fly in the open firmament of heaven, and ſoar upwards upon the wings of faith and hope, and holy love and joy. The prieſt having pronounced the leper clean from the diſeaſe, he muſt make him as clean as ever he could from all the remains of it, and from all other defilements, and he muſt, take time to do this. Thus they who have the comfort of the remiſſion of their ſins, by the ſprinkling of the blood of Chriſt upon their conſciences, muſt, with the utmoſt care and caution, *cleanſe themſelves from all filthineſs, both of fleſh and ſpirit*, and thoroughly purge themſelves from their old ſins: for *every one that hath this hope in him will* be concerned to *purify himſelf.*

Ver. 10—20. When God hath reſtored us the liberty of ordinances again, after reſtraint by ſickneſs, diſtance or otherwiſe, we ſhould take the firſt opportunity of teſtifying our reſpect to God, and our affection to his ſanctuary, by a diligent improvement of the liberty we are reſtored to.

Wherever the blood of Chriſt is applied for juſti-

fication, the oil of the Spirit is applied for ſanctification; for theſe two are inſeparable, and both neceſſary to our acceptance with God. The removal of any outward trouble is then doubly comfortable to us, when at the ſame time God gives us ſome aſſurance of the forgiveneſs of our ſins.

Ver. 33—53. If the prieſt, upon ſearch, found the leproſy got into the houſe, he muſt try to cure it, by taking out that part of the building that was infected. If yet it remained in the houſe, the whole houſe muſt be pulled down, and all the materials carried to the dunghill. The owner had better be without a dwelling, than live in one that was infected.

Note, The leproſy of ſin, if it be obſtinate, and incurable, will at laſt be the ruin of families and churches. The remainders of ſin and corruption in our mortal bodies, are like this leproſy in the houſe; after all our pains in ſcraping and plaiſtering we ſhall never be quite clear of it, till the *earthly houſe of this tabernacle be diſſolved*, and taken down. When we are dead, we ſhall be free from ſin, and not till then, Rom. vi. 7.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 5—14. One of the goats mentioned in theſe verſes, muſt be ſlain, in token of a ſatisfaction to be made to God's juſtice for ſin; the other muſt be ſent away, in token of the remiſſion, or diſmiſſion of ſin by the mercy of God.

Ver. 20—28. When we have the comfort of our pardon, God muſt have the glory of it. If we have the benefit of the ſacrifice of atonement, we muſt not grudge the ſacrifices of acknowledgement.

Ver. 29—34. The apoſtle obſerves it as an evidence of the inſufficiency of the legal ſacrifices to take away ſin, and purge the conſcience from it, that in them there *was a remembrance made of ſin every year*, upon the day of atonement, Heb. x. 1, 2, 3. The annual repetition of the ſacrifices ſhewed, that there was in them only a faint and feeble effort towards making atonement; it could be done effectually only by *offering up the body of Chriſt once for all*, and that once was ſufficient; that ſacrifice needed not to be repeated.

Obſerve, what the extent of the atonement was, which the high-prieſt made; it was *for the holy ſanctuary*, *for the tabernacle*, *for the altar*, *for the prieſts*, and *for all the people*.

Chriſt's ſatisfaction is that which atones for the ſins both of miniſters and people, *the iniquities of our holy* (and our unholy) things; the title we have to the privilege of ordinances, our comfort in them, and benefit by them, is all owing to the atonement Chriſt made.

Chriſt was figured by the two goats, which both made one offering: the ſlain goat was a type of Chriſt dying for our ſins; the ſcape-goat a type of Chriſt riſing again for our juſtification.

The entrance into heaven, which Chriſt made

for us is here typified by the high-prieſt's entrance into the moſt holy place. This the apoſtle hath expounded, Heb. ix. 7, &c. and he ſhews,

1. That heaven is the holieſt of all, but not of that building; and that the way into it, by faith, hope, and prayer, through a mediator, was not then ſo clearly manifeſted as it is now by the goſpel.

2. That Chriſt our high-prieſt entered into heaven at his aſcenſion once for all, and as a public perſon, in the name of all his ſpiritual Iſrael, and through the veil of his fleſh, which was rent for that purpoſe, Heb. x. 20.

3. That he entered *by his own blood*, Heb. ix. 12. taking with him to heaven the virtues of the ſacrifice he offered upon earth, and ſo ſprinkling his blood as it were before the mercy-ſeat, where it ſpeaks better things than the blood of bulls and goats could do. Hence he is ſaid to appear in the midſt of the throne as *a lamb that had been ſlain.* Rev. v. 6. And though he had no ſin of his own to expiate, yet it was by his own merit that he obtained for himſelf a reſtoration to his own ancient glory, John xvii. 4, 5. as well as an eternal redemption for us, Heb. ix. 12.

4. The high-prieſt in the holy place burned incenſe, which typified the interceſſion that Chriſt ever lives to make for us within the veil, in the virtue of his ſatisfaction. And we could not expect to live, no, not before the mercy-ſeat, if it were not covered with the cloud of this incenſe. Mere mercy

itſelf will not ſave us, without the interpoſal of a mediator. The interceſſion of Chriſt is there ſet forth before God as incenſe. And as the high-prieſt interceded for himſelf firſt, then for his houſhold, and then for all Iſrael, ſo our Lord Jeſus, in the 17th of St. John (which was a ſpecimen of the interceſſion he makes in heaven,) recommended himſelf firſt to his Father, then his diſciples, who were his houſehold, and then all that ſhould believe on him through their word; and having thus directed the uſes and intentions of his offering, he was immediately ſeized and crucified, purſuant to theſe intentions.

5. Herein the entry Chriſt made far exceeded Aaron's, that Aaron could not gain admiſſion, no, not for his own ſons, into the moſt holy place; but our Lord Jeſus has conſecrated for us alſo *a new and living way into the holieſt*, ſo that we alſo have *boldneſs to enter*, Heb. x. 19, 20.

And (laſtly) the high-prieſt was to come out again, but our Lord Jeſus ever lives, making interceſſion, and always appears in the preſence of God for us; whither as the forerunner he is for us entered, and where as agent he doth for us reſide.

In the year of jubilee, the trumpet which proclaimed liberty, was ordered to be ſounded in the cloſe of the *day of atonement*, Lev. xxv. 9. For the remiſſion of our debt, releaſe from our bondage, and our return to our inheritance, is all owing to the mediation and interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt. By the atonement, we obtain reſt for our ſouls, and all the glorious liberties of the children of God.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1—10. The ruin of young people hath often been obſerved to begin in the contempt of their parents, and the profanation of the ſabbath-day. Fitly therefore are theſe two precepts here put together in the beginning of this abridgment of the ſtatutes, *Ye ſhall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my ſabbaths.* Thoſe are hopeful children, and likely to do well, that make conſcience of honouring their parents, and keeping holy the ſabbath-day.

Works of piety muſt be always attended with works of charity, according as our ability is.

This law, in favour of the poor, though not binding now, in the letter of it, yet teacheth us,

1. That we muſt not be covetous and griping, and greedy of every thing we can lay any claim to, nor inſiſt upon our right in things ſmall and trivial:

2. That we muſt be well pleaſed to ſee the poor ſupplied and refreſhed with the fruit of our labours. We muſt not think every thing loſt that goes beſide ourſelves, nor any thing waſted that goes to the poor:

3. That times of joy, ſuch as harveſt-time is, are proper times for charity; that when we rejoice, the poor may rejoice with us, and when our hearts are bleſſing God, their loins may bleſs us.

Ver. 11—18. The fear of God will reſtrain us from doing even that which will not expoſe us to *men*'s reſentments.

Friendly reproof is a duty we owe to one another, and we ought both to give and take it in love.

Ver. 30—37. In weighing and meaſuring we pretend a deſign to give all their own with whom we deal; but if the weights and meaſures be falſe, it is like a corruption in judgment, it cheats under colour of juſtice; and thus to deceive a man to his damage, is worſe than picking his pocket, or robbing him on the highway. He that ſells is bound to give the full of the commodity, and he that buys the full of the price agreed upon, which cannot be done without juſt balances, weights, and meaſures. *Let no man go beyond, or defraud his brother*, for though it be hid from man, it will be found that *God is the avenger of all ſuch.*

The chapter concludes with a general command, *Ye ſhall obſerve all my ſtatutes and do them.* Note,

1. We are not likely to do God's ſtatutes unleſs we obſerve them with great care and conſideration.

2. Yet it is not enough barely to obſerve God's precepts, but we muſt make conſcience of obeying them. What will it avail us to be critical in our notions, if we be not conſcientious in our converſations?

3. An upright heart hath reſpect to all God's commandments, Pſalm cxix. 6. Though in many inſtances the hand fails in doing what ſhould be done, yet the eye obſerves all God's ſtatutes. We are not allowed to pick and chooſe our duty, but muſt aim at ſtanding complete in all the will of God.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1—9. Thoſe that eſcape puniſhment from men, yet ſhall not eſcape the righteous judgments of God; ſo wretchedly do they deceive themſelves that promiſe themſelves impunity in ſin.

God's people are, and muſt be perſons of diſtinction. God has diſtinguiſhed them by his holy covenant, and therefore they ought to diſtinguiſh themſelves by their holy converſations.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1—9. They whoſe office it is to inſtruct, muſt do it by example as well as precept, 1 Tim. iv. 12. The prieſts were to draw nearer to God than any of the people, and to be more intimately converſant with ſacred things, and therefore it was required of them that they ſhould keep at a greater diſtance than others from every thing that was defiling, and might diminiſh the honour of their prieſthood.

God's miniſters muſt be examples to others of patience under affliction; particularly that which toucheth in a very tender part, the death of their near relations. The children of miniſters ought of all others to take heed of doing any thing that is ſcandalous, becauſe in them it is doubly ſcandalous, and will be puniſhed accordingly by him whoſe name is jealous.

Ver. 16—24. Thoſe are unworthy to be called Chriſtians, and unfit to be employed as miniſters, that are ſpiritually blind, and lame, and crooked; whoſe ſins render them ſcandalous and deformed, ſo as that the offerings of the Lord are abhorred for their ſakes.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 17—33. This law, that whatever was offered in ſacrifice to God, ſhould be without blemiſh, made all the legal ſacrifices the fitter to be types of Chriſt, the great ſacrifice from which all thoſe derived their virtue. In alluſion to this law, he is ſaid to be a *Lamb without blemiſh*, and *without ſpot*, 1 Pet. i. 19. As ſuch a prieſt, ſo ſuch a ſacrifice became us, who was *harmleſs* and *undefiled*. When Pilate declared, *I find no fault in this man*; he did, thereby, in effect, pronounce the ſacrifice without blemiſh.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1—3. God's ſabbaths are to be religiouſly obſerved in every private houſe, by every family apart, as well as by many families together, in holy convocations. The ſabbath of the Lord in our dwellings will be their beauty, ſtrength, and ſafety; it will ſanctify, edify, and glorify them.

Ver. 4—14. We are taught by this law, for the offering of a ſheaf of the firſt fruits, *to honour the Lord with our ſubſtance, and with the firſt fruits of*

all our increaſe, Prov. iii. 9. They were not to eat of their new corn, till God's part was offered to him out of it, for we muſt always begin with God; begin our lives with him, begin every meal with him, begin every affair and buſineſs with him; *ſeek firſt the kingdom of God.*

Ver. 33, 34. The afflicting of their ſouls on the day of atonement, prepared them for the joy of the feaſt of tabernacles. The more we are grieved and humbled for ſin, the better qualified are we for the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1—9. The prieſts were to attend the lamps; they muſt ſnuff them, clean the candleſticks, ſupply them with oil morning and evening. Thus it is the work of the miniſters of the goſpel, to *hold forth that word of life*, not to ſet up new light, but by expounding and preaching the word, to make the light of it more clear and extenſive. This was the ordinary way of keeping the lamps burning; but when the church was poor, and in diſtreſs, we find its lamps fed conſtantly with *oil from the good olives* immediately, without the miniſtry of prieſts or people, Zech. iv. 2, 3. for though God has tied us to means, he has not tied himſelf to them; but will take effectual care that his lamps never go out in the world for want of oil.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 8—22. In alluſion to this ſolemn proclamation of the jubilee, it was foretold, concerning our Lord Jeſus, that he ſhould *preach the acceptable year of the Lord*, Iſa. lxi. 2. He ſent his apoſtles to proclaim it with the trumpet of the everlaſting goſpel, which they were to preach to every creature. And it ſtands ſtill foretold, that at the laſt day the trumpet ſhall ſound, which ſhall releaſe the dead out of the bondage of the grave, and reſtore us to our poſſeſſions.

It was provided, that the liberty which every man was born to, if it were ſold or forfeited, ſhould return at the year of jubilee. This was typical of our redemption by Chriſt from the ſlavery of ſin and Satan, and our reſtoration to the glorious liberty of God.

It was alſo provided, that if a man were conſtrained through poverty to ſell his land, for the ſubſiſtence of his family, yet, if afterwards he were able he might redeem it before the year of jubilee; and, that if the perſon himſelf were not able to redeem it his next kinſman might.

The kinſman is called *Goel*, the redeemer, Num. v. 8. Ruth iii. 9. to whom belonged the right of redeeming the land: and this typified Chriſt, who aſſumed our nature, that he might be our *kinſman*, bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh; and being

the only kinſman we have that is able to do it, to him belonged the right of redemption.

It becomes thoſe that have received mercy to ſhew mercy. If God has been gracious to us, we ought not to be rigorous with our brethren.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 1—13. The way to have God's ordinances fix among us, as a nail in a ſure place, is to cleave cloſely to the inſtitution of them.

Ver. 14—39. Thoſe are haſtening a pace to their own ruin, who begin to think it below them to be religious. They that begin to deſpiſe religion, will come by degrees to lothe it; and *mean* thoughts of it will ripen into *ill* thoughts of it: they that turn *from* it, will turn *againſt* it.

If a covenant be made and kept between God and man, God muſt have all the honour: but if ever it be broken, man muſt bear all the blame. If leſſer judgments do not their work, God will ſend greater; for when *he judgeth he will overcome*. If true repentance do not ſtay proceſs, it will go on till execution be taken out. Thoſe that are obſtinate and incorrigible, when they have weathered one ſtorm, muſt expect another more violent; and how ſeverely ſoever they are puniſhed, till they are in hell, ſtill they muſt ſay there is worſe behind, unleſs they repent.

All diſeaſes are God's ſervants, and do what he

appoints them, and are often uſed as ſcourges where-with he chaſtiſeth a provoking people.

Thoſe that caſt off the fear of God, expoſe themſelves to the fear of every thing elſe, Prov. xxviii. 1.

It is a righteous thing with God to leave thoſe to deſpair of pardon, that have preſumed to ſin: and it is owing to free grace, if we are not abandoned to pine away in the iniquity we were born in, and have lived in.

Ver. 40—46. An humble heart under humbling providences, prepares for deliverance and true comfort.

When thoſe that have walked contrary to God, in a way of ſin, return to him by ſincere repentance; though he has walked contrary to them in a way of judgment, he will return to them in a way of ſpecial mercy, purſuant to the covenants of redemption and grace.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1—13. This is part of the law concerning ſingular and extraordinary vows, which, though God did not expreſſly inſiſt on, yet if they were conſiſtent with, and conformable to, his general precepts, he would be well pleaſed with.

Note, We ſhould not only aſk what *muſt* we do, but what *may* we do, for the glory and honour of God?

As the *liberal deviſeth liberal things*, Iſa. xxxii. 8. ſo the pious deviſeth pious things, and the enlarged

heart would willingly do ſomething extraordinary in the ſervice of ſo good a maſter as God is.

Thoſe that are in the prime of their time, muſt look upon themſelves as obliged to do more in the ſervice of God and their generation, than can be expected either from minors, that are not yet arrived to their uſefulneſs, or from the aged, that have ſurvived it.

God expects and requires from men according to what they have, and not according to what they have not, Luke xxi. 4.

NUMBERS.

CHAPTER I. VER. 44—46.

We have in theſe verſes, the ſum total, as to the number of the men of Iſrael. They were in all ſix hundred thouſand fighting men, and three thouſand five hundred and fifty over.

Now we ſee what a vaſt body of men they were, let us conſider,

1. How much went to maintain all theſe (beſides twice as many more; no queſtion, of women and children, ſick and aged, and the mixed multitude) for forty years together in the wilderneſs, and they were all at God's finding every day; having their food from the dew of heaven, and not from the fatneſs of the earth. O what a great and good houſekeeper is our God, that hath ſuch numbers depending on him, and receiving from him every day!

2. What work ſin makes with a people: within forty years moſt of them would indeed have died of courſe, for the common ſin of mankind; for, when ſin entered into the world, death came with it; and how great are the deſolations which it makes in the earth! But, for the particular ſin of unbelief and murmuring, *all* thoſe that were now numbered, except two, laid their bones under their iniquity, and periſhed in the wilderneſs.

3. What a great multitude God's ſpiritual Iſrael will amount to at laſt: though at one time and in one place, they ſeem to be but a little flock, yet when they come all together, they ſhall be a great multitude, innumerable, Rev. vii. 9. And though the church's beginning be ſmall, its latter end ſhall greatly increaſe. *A little one ſhall become a thouſand.*

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1, 2. The Iſraelites were to pitch their tents about the tabernacle, which was to be in the midſt of them, as the tent or pavilion of a general in the center of an army. They muſt encamp round the tabernacle, that it might be equally a comfort and joy to them all, as it was a token of God's gracious preſence with them, Pſalm xlvi. 5. *God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved.* Their camp had reaſon to be hearty, when thus they had God in the heart of them. It is probable, the doors of all their tents were made to look towards the tabernacle from all ſides; for every Iſraelite ſhould have his eyes always towards the Lord: therefore they worſhipped at the tent door. Yet they were to pitch afar off, in reverence to the ſanctuary, that it might not ſeem crowded, and thruſt up among them; and that the common buſineſs of the camp might be no annoyance to it. They were alſo taught to keep their diſtance, leſt too much familiarity ſhould breed contempt.

Ver. 3—34. If God in his providence advance others above us, and abaſe us, we ought to be as well ſatisfied in his doing it that way, as if he did it, as this was done here, by a voice out of the tabernacle; and this conſideration, that it appears to be the will of God it ſhould be ſo, ſhould effectually ſilence all envies and diſcontents.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1—13. It is good for young people to act under the conduct and inſpection of thoſe that are aged and experienced.

It is a great ſatisfaction to parents to ſee their children walk in the truth, 3 John 4. Thoſe whom God finds work for, he will find help for.

It is a great truſt that is repoſed in miniſters, not only for the glory of Chriſt, but for the good of his church; ſo that they muſt not only keep the charge of the great high-prieſt, but muſt alſo be faithful to the ſouls of men, in truſt for whom a diſpenſation is committed to them.

When he that made us ſaves us, we are thereby laid under further obligations to ſerve him, and live to him. God's right to us by redemption corroborates the right he has to us by creation.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 21—33. The death of the ſaints is repreſented as the taking down of the tabernacle, 2 Cor. v. 1. and the putting of it off, 2 Pet. i. 14. The immortal ſoul, like the moſt holy things, is firſt covered and taken away, carried by angels unſeen, under the inſpection of the Lord Jeſus, our Eleazer; and care is taken alſo of the body, the ſkin and fleſh which are as the curtains, the bones and ſinews, which are as the bars and pillars: none of theſe ſhall be loſt. Commandment is given concerning the bones, a covenant made with the duſt; theſe are in ſafe cuſtody, and ſhall all be produced in the great day, when this tabernacle ſhall be ſet up again; and theſe vile bodies made like the glorious body of Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1—10. The purity of the church muſt be as carefully conſulted and preſerved, as the peace and order of it. It is requiſite not only that every Iſraelite be confined to his own ſtandard, but that every polluted Iſraelite be ſeparated from it. The wiſdom from above is firſt pure, then peaceable.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 22—27. Our bleſſing God is only our ſpeaking well of him; his bleſſing us is doing well for us: thoſe whom he bleſſeth, they are bleſſed indeed.

We cannot but be happy if we have God's love; and we cannot but be eaſy if we know that we have it.

A divine bleſſing goes along with divine inſtitutions, and puts virtue and efficacy into them. What Chriſt ſaith of the peace is true of the bleſſing, when God's miniſters pronounce the bleſſing, Peace be to this congregation, if the ſons of peace and heirs of bleſſing be there; the peace, the bleſſing, ſhall reſt upon them, Luke x. 5, 6. For in *every place where God doth record his* name, he will *meet his people and bleſs them.*

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1—9. Thoſe that are above others in power and dignity, ought to go before others, and endeavour to go beyond them in every thing that is good.

Ver. 10—89. By this we may know that God hears and accepts our prayers, if he gives us grace to hear and receive his word, for thus our communion with him is maintained and kept up.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1—14. The children of Iſrael kept the paſſover even in the wilderneſs. Though our condition be ſolitary and unſettled, yet we muſt keep up our attendance on God by holy ordinances and opportunity; for in them we may find the beſt converſation, and the beſt repoſe.

It is a bleſſed ſight to ſee people hungering and thirſting after God's ordinances, and to hear them complaining of that which prevents their enjoyment of them. It ſhould be a trouble to us when by any occaſion we are kept back from bringing our offering, in the ſolemnities of a Sabbath or a ſacrament; as it was to David, when he was baniſhed from the altar, Pſalm xlii. 1, 2. As thoſe who againſt their minds are forced to be abſent from God's ordinances, may comfortably expect the favour of God's grace under their affliction; ſo thoſe who of choice abſent themſelves, may juſtly expect the tokens of God's wrath for their ſin.

Ver. 15—23. This pillar of cloud and fire directed and determined all the motions, marches, and encampments, of Iſrael in the wilderneſs.

1. As long as the cloud reſted on the tabernacle, ſo long they continued in the ſame place, and never ſtirred.

There is no time loſt, while we are waiting God's time. It is as acceptable a piece of ſubmiſſion to

the will of God to ſit ſtill contentedly, when our lot requires it, as to work for him when we are called to it.

2. When the cloud was taken taken up, they removed, how comfortably ſoever they were encamped. Whether it moved by day or night, they delayed not to attend its motions. The people being thus kept at a conſtant uncertainty, and having no time fixed for their ſtays and removes, were obliged to hold themſelves in a conſtant readineſs to march upon very ſhort warning. And for the ſame reaſon we are kept at uncertainty, concerning the time of our putting off the earthly houſe of this tabernacle, that we may be always ready to *remove at the commandment of the Lord.*

3. As long and as far as the cloud moved, ſo long and ſo far they marched, and juſt there where it abode, they pitched their tents about it, and God's tent under it. It is uncomfortable ſtaying when God is departed; but very ſafe and pleaſant going, when we ſee God go before us, and reſting where he appoints us to reſt.

The conduct of this cloud is ſpoken of as ſignifying the guidance of the bleſſed Spirit, Iſa. lxiii. 14. *The Spirit of the Lord cauſed him to reſt*, and *ſo didſt thou lead thy people.*

This teacheth us,

1. The particular care God takes of his people. Nothing could be more expreſſive and ſignificant of God's tenderneſs of Iſrael, than the conduct of this

cloud was: it led them by the *right way*, Pſalm cvii. 7.

We are not now to expect ſuch ſenſible tokens of the divine preſence and guidance as this was; but the promiſe is ſure to all God's ſpiritual Iſrael, that he will *guide them by his counſel*, Pſalm lxxii. 24. *even unto death*, Pſalm xlviii. 14.

2. The particular regard we ought to have to God in all our ways. In our affections and actions, we muſt follow the direction of his word and Spirit. All the motions of our ſoul muſt be guided by the divine will. At the commandment of the Lord our heart ſhould always move and reſt. In all our affairs we muſt follow Providence, reconciling ourſelves to all its diſpoſals, and bringing our mind to our condition, whatever it is. The people of Iſrael having the cloud for their conduct, were eaſed of the trouble of holding councils of war, to conſider when and whither they ſhould march, which might have occaſioned ſtrifes and debates among them: nor needed they to ſend ſpies before to inform them of the poſture of the country, or pioneers to clear the way, or officers to mark out their camp; the pillar of cloud did all this for them. And thoſe that by faith commit their works unto the Lord, though they are bound to the prudent uſe of means, yet may in like manner be as eaſy in the expectation of the event. *Father, thy will be done*; diſpoſe of me and mine as thou pleaſeſt; here I am, deſirous to be found *waiting on my God continually*, to journey and

reſt at *the commandment of the Lord.* What thou wilt, and where thou wilt, only let me be thine, and always in the way of my duty.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 11—28. The children of Iſrael went *out of the wilderneſs of Sinai*, and reſted *in the wilderneſs of Paran.* Note, All our removes in this world are but from one wilderneſs to another. The changes which we think will be for the better, do not always prove ſo. While we carry about with us, wherever we go, the common infirmities of human nature, we muſt expect, wherever we go, to meet with its common calamities. We ſhall never be at reſt, never be at home, till we come to heaven, and all will be well there.

Ver. 29—36. Thoſe that are bound for the heavenly Canaan, ſhould invite and encourage all their friends to go along with them; for we ſhall have none the leſs of the treaſures of the covenant, and the joys of heaven, for others coming in to ſhare with us. And what argument can be more powerful with us, to take God's people for our people, than this, that God *had ſpoken good concerning them?* It is good having fellowſhip with thoſe that have fellowſhip with God, 1 John i. 3. and going with thoſe with whom God is. Zech. viii. 23.

The things of this world, that are ſeen, draw ſtrongly from the purſuit of the things of the other

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world, that are not ſeen. The magnetic virtue of this earth prevails with moſt people above the attractives of heaven itſelf.

It will very well conſiſt with our truſt in God's providence, to make uſe of the help of our friends, in thoſe things wherein they are capable of being ſerviceable to us. Even they that were led by miracle, muſt not ſlight the ordinary means of direction.

Thoſe that ſhare with God's Iſrael in their labours and hardſhips, ſhall ſhare with them in their comforts and honours. Thoſe that are willing to take their lot with them in a wilderneſs, ſhall have their lot with them in Canaan; *if we ſuffer with them, we ſhall reign with them*, Luke xxii. 28, 29.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1—3. Thoſe that are of a fretful diſcontented ſpirit, will always find ſomething or other to quarrel with, though the circumſtances of their outward condition be never ſo favourable.

God is acquainted with the ſecret murmurings of the heart; though they are induſtriouſly concealed from men.

When we complain without cauſe it is juſt with God to give us cauſe to complain.

Ver. 4—15. The beſt have their infirmities, and fail ſometimes in the exerciſe of that grace, which they are moſt eminent for.

Ver. 16—23. Even true and great believers

ſometimes find it hard to truſt God under the diſcouragements of ſecond cauſes, and *againſt hope to believe in hope.* Moſes himſelf can ſcarce forbear ſaying, *Can God furniſh a table in the wilderneſs?* when this was become the common cry. No doubt this was his infirmity.

Ver. 31—35. God often grants the deſires of ſinners in wrath, while he denies the deſires of his own people in love.

What we inordinately deſire, if we obtain it, we have reaſon to fear that it will be ſome way or other a grief and croſs to us.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1—3. Striving to be greateſt is a ſin which eaſily beſets diſciples themſelves, and it is exceeding ſinful. Even thoſe that are well preferred, are ſeldom pleaſed if others be better preferred.

When God's honour was concerned, as in the caſe of the golden calf, no man more zealous than Moſes; but when his own honour was touched, no man more meek; as bold as a lion in the cauſe of God, but as mild as a lamb in his own cauſe.

Ver. 4—9. We have reaſon to be afraid of ſaying or doing any thing againſt the ſervants of God; it is at our peril if we do, for God will plead their cauſe, and reckons that what *touches them, touches the apple of his eye.*



CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1—20. Notice is taken of the change of Joſhua's name. O ſhea, ſignifies a prayer for ſalvation, *Save thou*; Joſhua ſignifies a promiſe of ſalvation, *He will ſave*, in anſwer to that prayer; ſo near is the relation between prayers and promiſes. Prayers prevail for promiſes, and promiſes direct and encourage prayers. Jeſus is the ſame name with Joſhua, and it is the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt of whom Joſhua was a type, as ſucceſſor to Moſes Iſrael's captain, and conqueror of Canaan. Joſhua was the ſaviour of God's people from the powers of Canaan; but Chriſt is their Saviour from the powers of hell.

Ver. 21—25. The Iſraelites brought a bunch of grapes with them out of Canaan, as a proof of the extraordinary goodneſs of the country. The cluſter of grapes was ſo large, and ſo heavy, that they hung it upon a bar, and carried it between two of them. The place whence they took it was from thence called the *valley of the cluſter*; that famous cluſter which was to Iſrael both the earneſt and the ſpecimen of all the fruits of Canaan. Such are the preſent comforts which we have in communion with God, foretaſtes of the fulneſs of joy we expect in the heavenly Canaan. We may ſee by them what heaven is.

Ver. 26—33. Caleb ſignifies all heart, and he anſwered his name, was hearty himſelf, and would

have made the people ſo, if they would have hearkened to him. *The righteous are bold as a lion.* Difficulties that lie in the way of ſalvation, dwindle and vaniſh before a lively active faith in the power and promiſe of God. *All things are poſſible*, if they be but promiſed, *to him that believes.*

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1—4. Unbelief and diſtruſt of God, is a ſin that is its own puniſhment. Thoſe that do not truſt God, are continually vexing themſelves.

Sinners are enemies to themſelves; and thoſe that walk not in God's counſels, conſult their own miſchief and ruin.

Heaven is the Canaan ſet before us, a land flowing with milk and honey: thoſe that bring up never ſo ill a report of it, cannot but ſay that it is indeed a good land, only it is hard to get to it. Strict and ſerious godlineſs is looked upon as an impracticable thing, and this deters many who begun well from going on, rather than undergo the imaginary hardſhips of a religious life, they run themſelves upon the certain fatal conſequences of a ſinful courſe; and ſo they tranſcribe the folly of Iſrael, who when they were within a ſtep of Canaan, would make a captain, and return to Egypt.

Ver. 5.—10. Thoſe that are zealous friends to precious ſouls will ſtoop to any thing for their ſalvation. Moſes and Aaron, notwithſtanding the poſts

of honour they are in, proſtrate themſelves to the people to beg of them not to ruin themſelves.

If men were but throughly convinced of the deſirableneſs of the gains of religion, they would not ſtick at the ſervices of it.

No people can be ſafe, when they have provoked God to leave them.

While we have the preſence of God with us, we need not fear the moſt powerful force againſt us.

Nothing can ruin ſinners but their own rebellion.

It is common for thoſe whoſe hearts are *fully ſet in them to do evil*, to rage at thoſe who *give them good counſel*.

They who hate to be reformed, hate thoſe that would reform them; and count them their enemies becauſe they tell them the truth.

Thoſe who faithfully expoſe themſelves for God, are ſure to be taken under his ſpecial protection; and ſhall be hid from the rage of men, either *under* heaven or *in* heaven.

Ver. 11—19. Diſtruſt of God and his power and promiſe, is itſelf a very great provocation, and at the bottom of many other provocations.

The God of heaven keeps an account how long ſinners perſiſt in their provocations, and the longer it is, the more he is diſpleaſed.

The more God has done for us, the greater is the provocation if we diſtruſt him.

The beſt pleas in prayer are thoſe that are taken from God's honour; for they agree with the firſt

petition of the Lord's prayer, *Hallowed be thy name.* We must take our encouragement in prayer from the word of God, upon which he hath *caused us to hope.* Psalm cxix. 49.

Ver. 20—35. Note, 1. It ought to be the great care and endeavour of every one of us to *follow the Lord fully.* We must in a course of obedience to God's will, and service to his honour, follow him universally without dividing, uprightly without dissembling, chearfully without disputing, and constantly without declining; and this is following him fully.

2. Those that would follow God fully, must have another spirit, another from the spirit of the world, and another from what their own spirit has been. They must have the spirit of Caleb.

They that follow God fully in times of general apostacy, God will own them and honour them by singular preservations in times of general calamity. The heavenly Canaan shall be the everlasting inheritance of those that *follow the Lord fully.*

Ver. 36—45. Those greatly provoke God who misrepresent religion, cast reproach upon it, and raise prejudices in men's minds against it, or give occasion to those to do so who seek occasion.

Ringleaders in sin may expect to fall under particular marks of God's wrath, who will severely reckon for the blood of souls, which is thus spilt.

The remarkable deaths of notorious sinners are earnests of the final perdition of ungodly men, 2 Pet.

ii. 5, 6. Thus the wrath of God is revealed, that ſinners may hear and fear.

That which has been duty in its ſeaſon, when it comes to be mis-timed may be turned into ſin.

It is folly to promiſe ourſelves ſucceſs in that which we undertake contrary to the mind of God.

God will certainly leave thoſe that leave him; and thoſe that are left of him lie expoſed to all miſery.

That affair can never end well that begins with ſin.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 22—29. Obſerve, ſins committed ignorantly need to have atonement made for them; for though ignorance will excuſe, it will not juſtify, thoſe that might have known their Lord's will and did it not.

David prays to be cleanſed from his ſecret faults, i. e. thoſe ſins which he himſelf was not aware of, the errors he did not underſtand, Pſalm xix. 12.

Ver. 30—36. God is jealous for the honour of his ſabbaths, and will not hold them guiltleſs, whatever men do, that profane them.

One would think there could be no great harm in gathering a few ſticks, on what day ſoever it was; but God intended the exemplary puniſhment of him that did ſo on the Sabbath-day for a ſtanding warning to us all, to make conſcience of keeping holy the Sabbath.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1—11. The pride, ambition and emulation of great men, has always been the occaſion of a great deal of miſchief, both in churches and ſtates.

It will help to keep us from envying thoſe that are above us, duly to conſider how many there are above whom we are placed. Inſtead of fretting that any are preferred before us in honour, power, eſtate, or intereſt, in gifts, graces, or uſefulneſs, we have reaſon to bleſs God, if we, who are leſs than the leaſt, are not put hindmoſt.

Thoſe that ſtrive againſt God's ordinances and providences, whatever they pretend, and whether they are aware of it or no, do indeed ſtrive with their Maker.

Ver. 12—22. The wiſeſt and beſt cannot pleaſe every body, nor gain the good word of all. Thoſe often fall under the higheſt cenſures, who have merited the higheſt applauſe.

Thoſe that have never blemiſhed themſelves, need not fear being blemiſhed: when men condemn us we may be eaſy, if our hearts condemn us not.

If others fail in their duty to us, that doth not diſcharge us from our duty to them, nor take off the obligations we lie under to ſeek their welfare.

Ver. 23—34. We cannot expect to reap benefit by the prayers of our friends for our ſalvation,

unleſs we ourſelves be diligent and faithful in making uſe of the means of ſalvation.

Thoſe that would not periſh with ſinners, muſt *come out from among them* and be ſeparate. To thoſe whom God will ſave, he gives repentance, that they may *recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil.* Grace to ſeparate from evil doers, is one of the things that may accompany ſalvation. Others ruin ſhould be our warning. Could we by faith hear the outcries of thoſe that are gone down to the bottomleſs pit, we would give more diligence than we do to eſcape for our lives, leſt we alſo come into that condemnation.

Ver. 41—50. Thoſe make out the beſt title to public honours, that lay out themſelves the moſt for the public good, and obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful and uſeful.

Aaron was a type of Chriſt, who came into the world to make atonement for ſin, and to turn away the wrath of God from us, and who, by his mediation and interceſſion, *ſtands between the living and the dead*, to ſecure his choſen Iſrael to himſelf, and ſave them out of the midſt of a world infected with ſin and the curſe.

Thoſe that quarrel with leſſer judgments prepare greater for themſelves; for when God judgeth he will overcome.

It is much for the glory of God's goodneſs, that many a time, even in wrath, he remembers mercy; and even when judgments have been begun, prayer

has put a ſtop to them; ſo ready is he to forgive, and ſo little pleaſure doth he take in the death of ſinners.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 8—13. The deſign of God in all his providences, both mercies and judgements, and in the memorials of them, is to take away ſin and to prevent it. What God doth for the taking away of ſin, is done in real kindneſs to us, *that we die not.* All the bitter potions he gives, and all the ſharp methods he uſes with us, are for the cure of a diſeaſe which otherwiſe would certainly be fatal.

When God judgeth he will overcome, and one way or other will oblige the moſt obſtinate gainſayers, ſooner or later, to confeſs their folly; and that wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1—7. The greater the truſt is of work and power that is committed to us, the greater is our danger of contracting guilt, by falſifying and betraying that truſt. This is a good reaſon, why we ſhould neither be envious at the honours of others, nor ambitious ourſelves of high places; becauſe great dignity expoſeth us to great iniquity.

We are to value it as a great gift of the divine bounty to have thoſe joined to us, that will be helpful to us in the ſervice of God.

The preventing of ſin is the preventing of wrath; and the miſchief ſin has done, ſhould be a warning to us for the future, to watch againſt it, both in ourſelves and others.

Ver. 8—19. God's work is its own wages, and his ſervice carries its recompence along with it. Even in keeping of God's commandments there is great reward. The preſent pleaſures of religion are part of its pay.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1—10. We have here the divine appointment concerning the ſolemn burning of a red heifer to aſhes, and the preſerving of the aſhes; that of them might be made not a beautifying, but a purifying water, for that was the utmoſt the law reached to; it offered not to adorn as the goſpel doth, but to cleanſe only. This burning of the heifer, though it was not properly a ſacrifice of expiation, being not performed at the altar, yet was typical of the death and ſufferings of Chriſt; by which he intended not only to ſatisfy God's juſtice, but to purify and pacify our conſciences, that we may have not only peace with God, but peace in our own boſoms; to prepare for which Chriſt died not like the bulls and goats at the altar, but like the heifer without the camp.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1—13. After eight and thirty years tedious marches (or rather tedious reſts in the wilderneſs) backwards towards the Red Sea, the armies of Iſrael now at length ſet their faces towards Canaan again, and are come not far off from the place where they were, when, by the righteous ſentence of divine juſtice, they were made to begin their wanderings. Here at Meribah, *there was no water for the congregation.* The water out of the rock of Rephidim had followed them while there was need of it; but it is probable, that for ſome time they had been in a country where they were ſupplied in an ordinary way, and when common providence ſupplied them, it was fit the miracle ſhould ceaſe; but in this place it fell out that there was no water, or not ſufficient for the congregation. Here Moſes muſt, a ſecond time, in God's name, command water out of a rock for them, to ſhew that God is as able as ever to ſupply his people with good things, even in their greateſt ſtraights, and the utmoſt failure of ſecond cauſes. Moſes and Aaron however miſſed it in the management of this matter, and miſſed it ſo much, that God in diſpleaſure told them immediately they ſhould not have the honour of bringing Iſrael into Canaan. This is a ſtrange paſſage of their hiſtory, and from the whole of it, we may learn,

1. That the beſt of men have their failings, even in thoſe graces that they are moſt eminent for. The man Moſes was very meek, and yet here he ſinned in paſſion; wherefore *let him that thinks he ſtands*, take heed leſt he fall.

2. That God judgeth not as man judgeth concerning ſins. We would think there was not much amiſs in what Moſes ſaid and did, yet God ſaw cauſe to animadvert ſeverely upon it.

3. That God not only takes notice of, and is diſpleaſed with the ſins of his people, but the nearer any are to him, the more offenſive are their ſins, Amos iii. 2.

4. That when our heart is hot within us, we are concerned to take heed that we offend not with our tongue.

Yet, 5. It is an evidence of the ſincerity of Moſes, and his impartiality in writing, that he himſelf left this upon record concerning himſelf, and drew not a veil over his own infirmity; by which it appeared, that in what he wrote, as well as in what he did, he ſought God's glory more than his own.

Ver. 22—29. The chapter began with the funeral of Miriam, and it ends with the funeral of her brother Aaron. When death comes into a family, it often ſtrikes double.

All the congregation *mourned for Aaron thirty days.* While he lived they were murmuring at him upon all occaſions; but now he was dead they *mourned*

for him. Thus many are taught to lament the loſs of thoſe mercies, which they would not learn to be thankful for the enjoyment of. Many good men have had more honour done to their memories, than ever they had to their perſons; witneſs thoſe that were perſecuted while they lived, but when they were dead, had their ſepulchres garniſhed.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 4—9. Thoſe who have long enjoyed the means of grace, are apt to ſurfeit even on the heavenly manna, and to call it light bread. But let not the contempt which ſome caſt upon the word of God, make us value it the leſs: it is the bread of life, ſubſtantial bread, and will nouriſh thoſe who by faith feed upon it to life eternal, whoever calls it light bread.

The whole creation is at war with thoſe that are in arms againſt God.

Afflictions often change men's ſentiments concerning God's people, and teach them to value thoſe prayers which they once ſcorned.

Moſes, to ſhew that he had heartily forgiven the Iſraelites, bleſſes them who had curſed him, and *prays for them who had deſpitefully uſed him.* Herein he was a type of Chriſt, who interceded for his perſecutors, and a pattern to us to go and do likewiſe, and thus to ſhew that we love our enemies.

Juſtly are thoſe made to feel God's judgments that are not thankful for his mercies.

God ſent fiery ſerpents among the murmuring Iſraelites, which bit or ſtung many to death.

He made, however, wonderful proviſion for their relief, by ordering Moſes to make the repreſentation of a fiery ſerpent, which he did in braſs; and ſet it up on a very long pole, ſo that it might be ſeen from all parts of the camp: and every one that was ſtung with a fiery ſerpent, was healed by looking up to that ſerpent of braſs.

This method of cure was altogether miraculous, and the more wonderful, if it be true which naturaliſts ſay, that looking upon bright and burniſhed braſs, is hurtful to thoſe that are ſtung with fiery ſerpents. God can bring about his purpoſes by contrary means. There was much of goſpel in this appointment. Our Saviour has told us ſo, John iii. 14, 15. That *as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, ſo the ſon of man muſt be lifted up, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh.* Obſerve then a reſemblance,

1. Between their diſeaſe and ours. The devil is the old ſerpent, a fiery ſerpent, hence he appears, Rev. xii. 3. as *a great red dragon.* Sin is the biting of this fiery ſerpent, it is painful to the ſtartled conſcience, and poiſonous to the ſeared conſcience.

2. Between their remedy and ours.

1. It was God himſelf that deviſed and preſcribed this antidote againſt the poiſon of the fiery ſerpents;

ſo our ſalvation by Chriſt was the contrivance of infinite wiſdom. God himſelf hath found the ranſom.

2. It was a very unlikely method of cure; ſo our ſalvation by the death of Chriſt is to the Jews *a ſtumbling block*, and to the Greeks *fooliſhneſs*. It was Moſes that *lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs*; ſo the law is a ſcoolmaſter to bring us to Chriſt, and Moſes wrote of him, John v. 46.

3. That which cured was ſhaped in the likeneſs of that which wounded. So Chriſt, though perfectly free from ſin himſelf, yet was *made in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*, Rom. viii. 3.

4. The brazen ſerpent was lifted up; ſo was Chriſt. He was lifted up upon the croſs, John xii. 33, 34. He was lifted up by the preaching of the goſpel.

3. Between the application of their remedy and ours. They looked and lived, and we, if we believe, ſhall not periſh. It is by faith that we *look unto Jeſus*, Heb. xii. 2. *Look unto me and be ye ſaved*, Iſa. xlv. 22. We muſt be ſenſible of our wound, and of our danger by it, receive the record God has given concerning his Son, and rely upon the aſſurance he has given us that we ſhall be healed and ſaved by him, if we reſign ourſelves to his conduct. The brazen ſerpent's being lifted up would not cure, if it were not looked upon. If any pored on their wound, and would not look up to the brazen ſerpent, they died for certain. If they ſlighted

this method of cure, and had recourſe to natural medicines, and truſted to them, they juſtly periſhed; ſo, if ſinners either deſpiſe Chriſt's righteouſneſs, or deſpair of benefit by it, their wound will, without doubt, be fatal; but whoever looked up to this healing ſign, though from the outmoſt part of the camp, though with a weak and weeping eye, was certainly healed; ſo whoſoever believes in Chriſt, though as yet but weak in faith, ſhall not periſh.

Ver. 10—20. We have here an account of the ſeveral ſtages and removes of the children of Iſrael, till they came into the plains of Moab, out of which, at length, they paſſed over Jordan into Canaan. Natural motions, the nearer they come to their center, the quicker they are. Iſrael was now drawing near to the promiſed reſt. And now they ſet forward, as the expreſſion is. It were well if we would do thus in our way to heaven, rid ground in the latter end of our journey, and the nearer we come to heaven, be ſo much the more active and abundant in the work of the Lord.

In celebrating the memorials of God's favours to us, it is good to obſerve the ſeries of them, and how divine goodneſs and mercy hath conſtantly followed us, even from the Red Sea to the brook of Arnon. Comfort muſt be looked for only in the way of duty; and if we would ſhare in divine joys, we muſt carefully follow the divine conduct.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1—14. When we enter into a parley with temptations, we are in great danger of being overcome by them.

Ver. 15—21. Balaam had already been told what the will of God was, in which he ought to have acquieſced, and not to have deſired a re-hearing of that cauſe, which was already ſo plainly determined.

It is a very great affront to God, and a certain evidence of the dominion of corruption in the heart, *to beg leave to ſin.*

God hath wicked men in a chain; *hitherto they ſhall come* by his permiſſion, *but no farther.*

As God ſometimes denies the prayers of his people in love, ſo ſometimes he grants the deſires of the wicked in wrath.

The apoſtle deſcribes Balaam's ſin here to be, that he *ran greedily into an error for reward*, Jude 11. The love of money is the root of all evil.

Ver. 22—35. The ſin of ſinners is not to be thought the leſs provoking to God for his permitting it. We muſt not think that, becauſe God doth not by his providence reſtrain men from ſin, therefore he approves of it, or that it is not hateful to him: he ſuffers ſin and yet is angry at it.

Nothing is more diſpleaſing to God than malicious deſigns againſt his people: he that touches them, touches the apple of his eye.

It is good for us often to consider how useful the inferior creatures are and have been to us, that we may be thankful to God, and tender of them.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1—12. It is a common cheat that wicked people put upon themselves to think, that by the shews of piety they may prevail with God to countenance them, and connive at them in their greatest immoralities, especially in persecution, Isa. lxvi. 5. Balaam shews his opinion of religion to be better than his resolution. There are many who *desire to die the death of the righteous*, but do not *endeavour to live their life:* gladly would they have their end like theirs, but not their way. They would be saints in heaven, but not saints on earth.

Ver. 13—30. God easily can, and certainly will, baffle and disappoint all the devices and designs of the powers of darkness against his church, so that they shall not prevail to destroy it: and, as no weapon formed against the church shall prosper, so every tongue that riseth against her in judgment, God will control and condemn, Isa. liv. 17.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1—9. Those that oppose God and his people, will sooner or later be made to see themselves wretchedly deceived.

Many have their eyes open that have not their hearts open; are enlightened but not ſanctified; and that knowledge which puffs men up with pride, will but ſerve to light them to hell, whither many go with their eyes open.

Balaam does not only not curſe Iſrael, but is conſtrained to bleſs them, and even to pronounce a curſe on him that curſeth them, and a bleſſing on him that bleſſeth them.

Thus he confirms the bleſſing of Abraham, Gen. xii. 3. and ſpeaks as if therefore he did at this time bleſs Iſrael, and not curſe them, becauſe he deſired to ſhare in the bleſſing of Iſrael's friends, and dreaded the curſe on Iſrael's enemies.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1—5. Thoſe are our worſt enemies that draw us to ſin, for that is the greateſt miſchief any man can do us.

We are more in danger by the charms of a ſmiling world, than by the terrors of a frowning world.

Epidemical diſeaſes are the fruits of God's anger, and the juſt puniſhments of epidemical ſins; one infection follows the other.

Ver. 6—15. It is requiſite that miniſters ſhould be not only for God, but zealous for him. It is required of them, that they do more than others, for the ſupport and advancement of the intereſts of God's kingdom among men.

Ver. 16—18. Whatever draws us to ſin, ſhould be a vexation to us, as a thorn in the fleſh.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 63—65. That which is obſervable in this concluſion of the account of numbering of the people is, the execution of the ſentence paſſed upon the murmurers, Numb. xiv. 29. That not one of thoſe who *were numbered from twenty years old and upward*, ſhould enter Canaan, except Caleb and Joſhua. Herein appeared,

1. The righteouſneſs of God, and his faithfulneſs to his threatnings, when once the *decree is gone forth*. He *ſware in his wrath*, and what he had ſworn he performed. Better all thoſe carcaſſes, had they been ten times as many, ſhould fall to the ground, than the word of God.

2. The goodneſs of God to this people, notwithſtanding their provocations. Though that murmuring race was cut off, yet God raiſed up another generation, which was as numerous as they, that though they periſhed, yet the name of Iſrael might not be cut off, leſt the inheritance of the promiſe ſhould be loſt for want of heirs.

3. The truth of God, in performing his promiſe made to Caleb and Joſhua. They were to be preſerved from falling in this common ruin, and they were ſo. The arrows of death, though they fly in the dark, they do not fly at random, even when they

fly thickeſt, but are directed to the mark intended, and no other. All that are written among the living ſhall have their lives given them for a prey, in the moſt dangerous times. Thouſands may fall on their right hand, and ten thouſand on their left, but they ſhall eſcape.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 12—14. Though Moſes was a ſervant of the Lord, a faithful ſervant, yet once he *rebelled againſt God's commandment*, and failed in his duty; though a very honourable ſervant, and highly favoured, yet he ſhall hear of his miſcarriage, and all the world ſhould hear of it too, again and again; for God will ſhew his diſpleaſure againſt ſin, even in thoſe that are neareſt and deareſt to him. Thoſe that are *in reputation for wiſdom and honour* have need to be conſtantly careful of their works and ways; leſt at any time they ſay and do that which may be a diminution either to their comfort or to their credit.

Moſes muſt die, but only as Aaron died before him. And Moſes had ſeen how eaſily and cheerfully Aaron had put off the prieſthood firſt, and then the body. Let not Moſes, therefore, be afraid of dying; it was but to be *gathered to his people*, as Aaron was gathered. Thus the death of our near and dear relations ſhould be improved by us,

1. As an engagement to us to think often of dy-

ing. We are not better than our fathers or brethren; if they are gone, we are going; if they are gathered already, we muſt be gathered very ſhortly.

2. As an encouragement to us to think of death without terror, and even to pleaſe ourſelves with the thoughts of it: it is but to die as ſuch and ſuch died, if we lived as they lived, and their *end was peace*; *they finiſhed their courſe with joy*; why then ſhould we fear any evil in that melancholy valley?

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1—11. The intention of divine inſtitutions is well anſwered, when one religious ſervice helps to fit us for another, and all for Heaven.

Thoſe who would know the mind of God in the Scripture, muſt compare one part of the Scripture with another, and put thoſe parts together that have reference to the ſame thing; for the later diſcoveries of divine light explain what was dark, and ſupply what was defective in the former, *that the man of God may be perfect.*

Ver. 12—40. A diſpoſition to be chearful doth us no harm, nor is any bad ſymptom, when it is ſo far from unfitting us for, that it encourageth and enlargeth our hearts in, the duties of God's immediate ſervice.

Our burnt-offerings of praiſe cannot be accepted of God, unleſs we have an intereſt in the great ſacrifice of propitiation, which Chriſt offered, when for us he made himſelf a ſin-offering.

Our miniſters praying with us, and for us, will not excuſe us from praying for ourſelves.

CHAP. XXX.

Ver. 3—16. It is very obſervable how careſully the divine law conſults the good order of families and preſerves the power of ſuperior relations, and the duty and reverence of inferiors. It is fit every man ſhould *bear rule in his own houſe*, and have his wife and children in ſubjection *with all gravity:* and rather than this great rule ſhould be broken, or any encouragement given to inferior relations to break thoſe bonds aſunder, God himſelf would quit his right, and releaſe the obligation even of a ſolemn vow; ſo much doth religion ſtrengthen the ties of all relations, and ſecure the welfare of all ſocieties, and in it the *families of the earth are bleſſed.*

CHAP. XXXI.

Ver. 1—6. God ſometimes removes uſeful men, when we think they could ill be ſpared; but this ought to ſatisfy us, that they are never removed till they have done the work which was appointed them.

CHAP. XXXII.

Ver. 1—15. If men did conſider as they ought what would be the end of ſin, they would be afraid of the beginnings of it.

Ver. 16—27. Sin will without doubt find out the ſinner ſooner or later. It concerns us therefore to find our ſins out that we may repent of them, and forſake them, leſt our ſins find us out to our ruin and confuſion.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Ver. 1—49. When the children of Iſrael began their tedious march through the wilderneſs, God ordered Moſes to keep a journal, or diary, and to inſert in it all the remarkable occurrences of their way; that it might be a ſatisfaction to himſelf in the review, and an inſtruction to others when it ſhould be publiſhed. It may be of good uſe for private Chriſtians, but eſpecially for thoſe in public ſtations, to preſerve in writing an account of the providences of God concerning them, the conſtant ſeries of mercies they have experienced, eſpecially thoſe turns and changes which have made ſome days of their lives more remarkable. Our memories are deceitful and need this help, that we may *remember all the way which the Lord our God has led us* in this wilderneſs, Deut. viii. 2.

God led the Iſraelites to and fro, forward and backward, as in a maze or labyrinth, and yet they were all the while under the direction of the pillar of cloud and fire. He *led them about*, Deut. xxxii. 10. and yet *led them the right way*, Pſalm cvii. 7. The way God takes in bringing his people to himſelf is always the beſt way, though it doth not always ſeem the neareſt.

Ver. 50—56. We muſt expect trouble and affliction from that, whatever it is, which we ſinfully indulge: that which we are willing ſhould tempt us, we ſhall find will vex us.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Ver. 1—15. We have here a particular draught of the line, by which the land of Canaan was meted and bounded on all ſides. Now concerning the limits of Canaan, obſerve,

That it lay (comparatively) in a very little compaſs. As it is here bounded, it is reckoned to be but about one hundred and ſixty miles in length, and about fifty in breadth. Perhaps it did not contain more than half as much ground as England; and yet this is the country which was promiſed to the father of the faithful, and was the poſſeſſion of the ſeed of Iſrael. See how little a ſhare of the world God often gives to his own people. They that have their portion in heaven, have reaſon to be content with a ſmall pittance of this earth; but as here, what is wanting in quantity is made up in quality. *A little that a righteous man has*, having it from the love of God, and with his bleſſing, is far better and more comfortable *than the riches of many wicked.* Pſalm xxxvii. 16.

CHAP. XXXV.

Ver. 9—34. Here is a great deal of good goſpel couched under the type and figure of the cities of refuge; and to them the apoſtle ſeems to allude, when he ſpeaks of our *flying for refuge to the hope ſet before us*, Heb. vi. 18. and being found in Chriſt. Phil. iii. 9. Obſerve,

1. There were ſeveral cities of refuge, and they were ſo appointed in ſeveral parts of the country, that the man-ſlayer wherever he dwelt in the land of Iſrael, might, in half a day, reach one or other of them: ſo though there is but one Chriſt appointed for our refuge, yet wherever we are he is a refuge at hand, a very preſent help, for *the word is nigh us*, and Chriſt is the word.

2. The man-ſlayer was ſafe in any of theſe cities; ſo in Chriſt, believers that fly to him and reſt in him, are protected from the wrath of God, and the curſe of the law. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. viii. 1.

Who ſhall condemn thoſe that are thus ſheltered?

3. They were all cities of the Levites. It was a kindneſs to the poor priſoner, that though he might not go up to the place where the ark was, yet he was in the midſt of Levites, who would teach him the good knowledge of the Lord, and inſtruct him how to improve the providence he was now under. It might alſo be expected, that the Levites would

comfort and encourage him, and bid him welcome; ſo it is the work of goſpel miniſters to bid poor ſinners welcome to Chriſt, and to aſſiſt and counſel thoſe that through grace are in him.

4. Even ſtrangers and ſojourners, though they were not native Iſraelites, might take the benefit of theſe cities of refuge: So in Chriſt Jeſus no difference is made between Greek and Jew, even the *ſons of the ſtranger* that by faith fly to Chriſt ſhall be ſafe in him.

5. Even the ſuburbs, or borders of the city were a ſufficient ſecurity to the offender: So there is virtue, even in the hem of Chriſt's garment, for the healing and ſaving of poor ſinners. If we cannot reach to a full aſſurance, we may comfort ourſelves in a *good hope through grace.*

6. The protection which the man-ſlayer found in the city of refuge, was not owing to the ſtrength of its walls, or gates, or bars; but purely to the divine appointment: ſo it is the word of the goſpel that gives ſouls ſafety in Chriſt; *for him hath God the Father ſealed.*

7. If the offender were ever caught ſtraggling out of the borders of his city of refuge, or ſtealing home to his own houſe again, he loſt the benefit of his protection, and lay expoſed to the avenger of blood; ſo thoſe that *are in Chriſt* muſt *abide in Chriſt*, for it is at their peril if they forſake him and wander from him. *Drawing back* is to *perdition.*

CHAP. XXXVI.

Ver. 5—13. Here is,

The concluſion of this whole book, referring to the latter part of it, *theſe are the judgments which the Lord commanded in the plains of Moab*; theſe foregoing, ever ſince Chap. xxvi. moſt of which related to their ſettlement in Canaan, into which they were now entering. Whatever new condition God is by his providence bringing us into, we muſt beg of him to teach us the duty of it, and to enable us to do it, that we may do the work of the day in its day, of the place in its place.

DEUTERONOMY.

CHAPTER I. VER. 1—8.

THERE is no better evidence and earneſt of God's favour than his putting his law in our hearts, Pſalm cxlvii. 19, 20.

Though God bring his people into trouble and affliction, into ſpiritual trouble and affliction of mind, he knows when they have *dwelt long enough* in it, and will certainly find a time, the fitteſt time, to advance them from the terrors of the *ſpirit of bondage*, to the comforts of the *ſpirit of adoption*. See Rom. viii. 15.

When God commands us to go forward in our chriſtian courſe, he ſets the heavenly Canaan before us for our encouragement.

Moſes reminds the Iſraelites of their march from Horeb to Kadeſh-barnea, through *that great and terrible wilderneſs*. This he takes notice of, to make them ſenſible of the great goodneſs of God, in guiding them through ſo great a wilderneſs, and protecting them from the miſchiefs they were ſurrounded with. The remembrance of our dangers ſhould make us thankful for our deliverances.

All our diſobedience to God's laws, and diſtruſt of his power and goodneſs, flows from a diſbelief of his word. A ſad paſs it is come to with us, when the God of eternal truth cannot be believed!

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1—7. Here is, a ſhort account of the long ſtay of Iſrael in the wilderneſs: *We compaſſed Mount Seir many days.* Near thirty-eight years they wandered in the deſarts of Seir; probably in ſome of their reſts they ſtayed ſeveral years, and never ſtirred.

God by this not only chaſtiſed them for their murmuring and unbelief; but prepared them for Canaan, by humbling them for ſin, teaching them to mortify their luſts, to follow God, and to comfort themſelves in him. It is a work of time to make ſouls meet for Heaven, and it muſt be done by a long train of exerciſes.

Ver. 8—23. God gives and preſerves outward bleſſings to wicked men, to ſhew that theſe are not the beſt things, but he has better in ſtore for his own children.

Ver. 24—37. Thoſe that meddle with the people of God, meddle to their own hurt; and God ſometimes ruins his enemies by their own reſolves. See Mich. iv. 11, 12, 13. Rev. xvi. 14.

What a new world did Iſrael now come into! Moſt of them were born, and had lived all their days in a vaſt howling wilderneſs; where they knew not what either fields or cities were, had no houſes to dwell in, neither ſowed nor reaped, and now, of a ſudden to become maſters of a country ſo well built, ſo well huſbanded, this made them amends for their

long waiting; and yet it was but the earneſt of a great deal more.

Much more joyful will the change be which holy ſouls will experience, when they remove out of the wilderneſs of this world, to the *better country, that is the heavenly; to the city that hath foundations.*

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1—11. Thoſe that are not awakened by the judgments of God upon others, but perſiſt in their defiance of heaven, are ripening apace for the like judgments upon themſelves, Jer. iii. 8.

Ver. 12—20. When we are at reſt, we ſhould deſire to ſee our brethren at reſt too, and ſhould be ready to do what we can towards it; for we are not born for ourſelves, but are members one of another. A good man can not rejoice much in the comforts of his family, unleſs withal he ſees *peace upon Iſrael*, Pſalm cxxviii. 6.

Ver. 21—29. We ſhould never allow any deſires in our hearts which we cannot in faith offer up to God by prayer; and what deſires are innocent, let them be preſented to God.

The more we ſee of God's glory in his works, the more we ſhall deſire to ſee. *The works of the Lord are great*, and therefore are ſought out more and more, *of all them that have pleaſure therein.*

The more we are affected with what we have ſeen of God, and of his wiſdom, power, and good-

neſs, the better prepared we are for farther diſcoveries. Thoſe ſhall ſee the works of God that admire him in them.

Thoſe may hope to obtain and enjoy God's favours, that know how to value them.

If God do not by his providence give us what we deſire, if by his grace he makes us content without it, it comes much to one.

Thoſe to whom God gives a charge, he will be ſure to give encouragement. And it is a comfort to the church's friends, when they are dying and going off, to ſee God's work likely to be carried on by other hands, when they are ſilent in the duſt.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1—40. Never was any people ſo privileged in ſpeaking to God, as Iſrael was.

He was nigh unto them in all that they called upon him for; ready to anſwer their inquiries, and reſolve them by his oracle; ready to anſwer their requeſts, and to grant them by a particular providence.

Obſerve, 1. It is the character of God's Iſrael that on all occaſions they call upon him, in every thing they make their requeſts known to God.

2. Thoſe that call upon God ſhall certainly find him within call, and ready to give an anſwer of peace to every prayer of faith; See Iſa. lviii. 9.

3. This is a privilege which makes the Iſrael of God truly great and honourable.

Moſes encourages the Iſraelites to hope that God would reſerve mercy for them in the latter days; that he would by his judgments upon them bring them to repentance, and take them again into covenant with himſelf. Where obſerve,

1. That whatever place we are in, we may *from thence ſeek the Lord our God*, though never ſo remote from our own land, or from his holy temple. There is no part of this earth that has a gulph fixed between it and heaven.

2. They, and they only, ſhall find God to their comfort, who ſeek him with all their heart, i. e. that are entirely devoted to him, earneſtly deſirous of his favour, and ſolicitous to obtain it.

3. Afflictions are ſent to engage and quicken us to ſee God, and by the grace of God working with them, many are reduced to their right mind.

4. God's faithfulneſs to his covenant encourageth us to hope, that he will not reject us, though we are driven to him by affliction. If *we* at length remember the covenant, we ſhall find that *he* has not forgotten it.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1—5. When we hear the word of God, we muſt ſet ourſelves to learn it, that we may have it ready upon all occaſions, and what we have learned, we muſt put in practice, for that is the end of

hearing and learning; not to fill our heads with notions, or our mouths with talk; but to rectify and direct our affections, and converſations.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 4—16. It is better to have one fountain than a thouſand ciſterns; one all-ſufficient God, than a thouſand inſufficient ones.

God's words muſt be laid up in our heart, that our thoughts may be daily converſant with them, and employed about them; and that thereby the whole ſoul may be brought to abide and act under the influence and impreſſion of them.

Ver. 17—25. Obſerve, 1. All divine inſtitutions have a certain meaning, and there is ſomething great deſigned in them.

2. It concerns us to know and underſtand the meaning of them, that we may perform a reaſonable ſervice, and may not *offer the blind for ſacrifice*.

3. It is good for children betimes to inquire into the true intent and meaning of the religious obſervances they are trained up in. They that are thus inquiſitive in divine things, it is a good ſign they are concerned about them, and a good means of their attaining to a great acquaintance with them. *Then ſhall we know*, if thus *we follow on to know*.

Parents and teachers muſt give inſtruction to thoſe under their charge, though they do not aſk it; nay, though they have an averſion to it; much more muſt

they be ready to anſwer queſtions, and to give inſtruction when it is deſired; for it may be hoped, they that *aſk* it will be willing to *receive* it.

God commands us nothing but what is really for *our own good.* It is our intereſt, as well as our duty, to be religious.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 12—26. We muſt not think that becauſe the deliverance of the church, and the deſtruction of its enemies is not effected preſently, therefore it will never be effected. God will do his own work in his own method and time; and we may be ſure that always is the beſt. Thus corruption is driven out of the hearts of believers *by little and little.* The work of ſanctification is carried on gradually; but judgment will at length be brought forth into a complete victory.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1—9. It is very good for us to remember all the ways of God's providence and grace, by which he hath led us hitherto through this wilderneſs, that we may be prevailed with cheerfully to ſerve him and truſt in him.

God often brings his people low, that he may have the honour of helping them.

Thoſe that bear the inconveniences of an afflicted ſtate with patience and ſubmiſſion, are humbled by them, and prove well under them, are beſt prepared for better circumſtances.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1—6. Our gaining poſſeſſion of the heavenly Canaan, as it muſt be attributed to God's power, and not to our might, ſo it muſt be aſcribed to God's grace and not to our merit. In Chriſt we have both *righteouſneſs and ſtrength*; in him therefore we muſt glory, and not in ourſelves, or any ſufficiency of our own.

Ver. 7—29. It is good for us often to remember againſt ourſelves, with ſorrow and ſhame, our former ſins; and to review the records which conſcience keeps of them, that we may ſee how much we are indebted to free grace; and may humbly own, that we never merited at God's hand any thing but wrath and the curſe.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1—11. Chriſt is the ark in which now our ſalvation is kept ſafe, that it may be not loſt, as it was in the firſt Adam, when he had it in his own hand.

A ſettled miniſtry is a great bleſſing to a people, and a ſpecial token of God's favour. And ſince the particular prieſt could not continue by reaſon of death, God ſhewed his care of the people in ſecuring a ſucceſſion. When *Aaron died*, the prieſthood did not die with him, but *Eleazer his ſon miniſtred*

in his ſtead, and took care of the ark, in which the tables of ſtone were depoſited, that they ſhould ſuffer no damage: there they be, and he has the cuſtody of them. Under the law a ſucceſſion in the miniſtry was kept up, by an entail of the office on a certain tribe and family: But now, under the goſpel, when the effuſion of the Spirit is more plentiful and powerful, the ſucceſſion is kept up by the Spirit's operation on men's hearts; qualifying for, and inclining to that work, ſome in every age, that the name of Iſrael may not be blotted out.

Ver. 12—22. When we have received mercy from God, it becomes us to enquire what returns we ſhall make to him.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1—7. Love will work in obedience, and that only is acceptable obedience which flows from a principle of love, 1 John v. 3.

God's mercies to us, when we were young, we ſhould remember and retain the impreſſions of when we are old. What our eyes have ſeen, eſpecially in our early days, has affected us, and ſhould be improved by us long after.

Ver. 8—17. The better God has provided, by our outward condition, for our eaſe and convenience, the more we ſhould abound in his ſervice: the leſs we have to do for our bodies, the more we ſhould do for God and our ſouls.

The greateſt comfort and ſweetneſs of any mercy, is to ſee it coming from heaven, and the immediate gift of divine providence.

The cloſer dependence we have upon God, the more chearful we ſhould be in our obedience to him.

Ver. 18—25. Let our tongues be employed about the word of God. Let it be the ſubject of our familiar diſcourſe, wherever we are; eſpecially with our children, who muſt be taught the ſervice of God, as the one thing needful; much more needful than either the rules of decency, or the calling they muſt live by in this world. Great care and pains muſt be taken to acquaint children betimes, and to affect them, with the word of God, and the wondrous things of his law. Nor will any thing contribute more to the proſperity and perpetuity of religion in a nation, than the good education of children.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1—4. We muſt not think that our religion is inſtituted only to be our work in the years of our ſervitude; our entertainment in the places of our ſolitude; and our conſolation in affliction only: no, when we come to poſſeſs a good land, ſtill we muſt keep up the worſhip of God in Canaan, as well as in a wilderneſs; when we are grown up, as well as when we are children; when we are full of buſineſs, as well as when we have nothing elſe to do.

The kingdom of God muſt be ſet up, both in perſons and places, upon the ruins of the devil's kingdom; for they cannot ſtand together, nor can there be any communion between Chriſt and Belial.

Ver. 5—32. It is not only our wiſdom, but our duty, to live according to our eſtates, and not to ſpend above what we have. As it is unjuſt on the one hand to hoard what ſhould be laid out; ſo it is much more unjuſt to lay out more than we have; for what is not our own, muſt needs be another's, who is thereby robbed and defrauded.

It is beſt to be ignorant of that which there is danger of being infected by.

We may then hope in our religious worſhip to obtain the divine acceptance when we obſerve the divine appointment. God will have his own work done in his own way.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 6—11. It is the policy of the tempter to ſend his ſolicitations by the hand of thoſe we love, whom we leaſt ſuſpect of an ill deſign upon us, and whom we are deſirous to pleaſe, and apt to conform ourſelves to. The enticement here is ſuppoſed to come from a brother or child, that are near by nature; from a wife or friend, that are near by choice, and are to us *as our own ſouls*. Satan tempted Adam by Eve, and Chriſt by Peter. We are therefore concerned to ſtand upon our guard againſt an ill propoſal, when the perſon that propoſeth it

can pretend to an intereſt in us, that we may never ſin againſt God in compliment to the beſt friend we have in the world.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 22—29. We muſt be ſure to give God his full dues out of our eſtates; for, being but ſtewards of them, it is required that we be faithful, as thoſe that muſt give an account.

The more pleaſure we find in the ways of religion, the more likely we ſhall be to perſevere in thoſe ways. Note,

1. The bleſſing of God is all in all to our outward proſperity, and without that bleſſing the work of our hands which we do will bring nothing to paſs.

2. The way to obtain that bleſſing is to be diligent and charitable. The bleſſing deſcends upon the working hand. Expect not that God ſhould bleſs thee in thy idleneſs, and love of eaſe, but in all the work of thy hand.

It is the hand of the diligent, with the bleſſing of God upon it, that makes rich, Prov. x. 4, 22. And it deſcends upon the giving hand: he that thus ſcatters, certainly increaſes, and the liberal ſoul will be made fat. It is an undoubted truth, though little believed, that to be charitable to the poor, and to be free and generous in the ſupport of religion, and any good work, is the ſureſt and ſafeſt way of thriving.

What is lent to the Lord, will be repaid with abundant intereſt, Ezek. xliv. 30.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1—11. This year of releaſe typified the grace of the goſpel, in which is proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord, and by which we obtain the releaſe of our debts, that is, the pardon of our ſins; and we are taught to forgive injuries, as we are, and hope to be, forgiven of God.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1—17. Note, 1. It is the will of God that his people ſhould be a chearful people. If they that were under the law muſt rejoice before God, much more muſt we that are under the grace of the goſpel, which makes it our duty not only as here, to *rejoice in our feaſts*, but to *rejoice evermore*; *to rejoice in the Lord always*.

2. When we rejoice in God ourſelves, we ſhould do what we can to help others alſo to rejoice in him, by comforting the mourners, and ſupplying the neceſſitous; that even *the ſtranger*, the fatherleſs, and the widow, may rejoice with us. See Job xxix. 13.

3. We muſt rejoice in God not only becauſe of what we have received, and are receiving from him daily; but becauſe of what he hath promiſed, and we expect to receive yet farther from him; becauſe

he ſhall bleſs thee, therefore *thou ſhalt rejoice*. Thoſe that make God their joy, may *rejoice in hope*, for he is faithful that has promiſed.

Ver. 18—22. Adhere to the principles of juſtice; act by the rules of juſtice; countenance the demands of juſtice; imitate the patterns of juſtice; and purſue with reſolution that which appears to be juſt.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 14—20. In all caſes, God's choice, if we can but know it, muſt direct, determine, and overrule ours.

We ſhould take heed of that commerce or converſation, by which we are in danger of being drawn into ſin.

It is of great uſe for each of us to write down what we obſerve as moſt affecting and edifying to us, out of the ſcriptures and good books, and the ſermons we hear.

Let not thoſe that call themſelves men of buſineſs, think that will excuſe them from making religion their buſineſs; nor let great men think it any diſparagement to them to write for themſelves thoſe *great things of God's law which he hath written to them*, Hoſ. viii. 12.

Chriſt's ſcholars never learn above their bibles, but will have conſtant occaſion for them till they come to that world where knowledge and love will both be made perfect. The word of God is not de-

ſigned merely to be an entertaining ſubject of ſpeculation, but to be a commanding rule of converſation.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1—8. Thoſe that have God for their inheritance, according to the new covenant, ſhould not be greedy of great things in the world; neither gripe what they have, nor graſp at more; but look upon all preſent things with the indifference which becomes thoſe that believe God to be all-ſufficient.

Ver. 15—22. Moſes was ſuch a prophet as was a law-giver to Iſrael, and their deliverer out of Egypt; and ſo was Chriſt, he not only teaches but rules and ſaves. Moſes was the founder of a new diſpenſation, by ſigns and wonders and mighty deeds; and ſo was Chriſt, by which he proved himſelf a teacher come from God. Was Moſes faithful; So was Chriſt; Moſes as a ſervant, but Chriſt as a ſon.

Whoever turns a deaf ear to Jeſus Chriſt, it is at their peril; the ſame that is the prophet is to be their judge, John xii. 48.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1—13. The cities of refuge were to be a protection to him that ſlew another caſually; ſo that he ſhould not die for that as a crime which was not his voluntary act, but only his unhappineſs. To make the flight of the delinquent the more eaſy, the

way muſt be prepared that led to the city of refuge. Probably, they had cauſeways or ſtreetways leading to thoſe cities, and the Jews ſay, that the magiſtrates of Iſrael upon one certain day in the year, ſent out meſſengers to ſee that thoſe roads were in good repair, and they were to remove ſtumbling-blocks, mend bridges that were broken; and where two ways met, they were to ſet up a mercurial poſt, with a finger to point the right way, on which was engraven in great letters, *Miklat*; *Micklat*; *refuge*, *refuge*. In alluſion to this, goſpel-miniſters are to ſhew people the way to Chriſt, and to aſſiſt and direct them in flying by faith to him for refuge. They muſt be ready to remove their prejudices, and help them over their difficulties. And bleſſed be God, *the way of holineſs*, to all that ſeek it faithfully is a *high-way*, ſo plain, that *the way-faring men, though fools, ſhall not err therein.*

It is provided that the cities of refuge ſhould be no ſanctuary or ſhelter to a wilful murderer. Thoſe that flee to Chriſt from their ſins, ſhall be ſafe in him, but not thoſe that expect to be ſheltered by him in their ſins.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1—9. Thoſe have no reaſon to fear that have God with them.

It is the work of Chriſt's miniſters to encourage his good ſoldiers in their ſpiritual conflicts with the world and the fleſh, and to aſſure them of a con-

queſt, yea, more than a conqueſt through Chriſt that loved us.

He that has a houſe of his own, ſhould dedicate it to God, by ſetting up, and keeping up, the fear and worſhip of God in it, that he may have a church in his houſe; and nothing ſhould be ſuffered to divert a man from this.

Ver. 10—20. In dealing with the worſt of enemies, the laws of juſtice and honour muſt be obſerved; and, as the ſword muſt never be taken in hand without cauſe, ſo not without cauſe ſhewn.

Thoſe enterpriſes which we undertake by a divine warrant, and proſecute by a divine direction, we may expect to ſucceed in.

Every creature of God is good, and as nothing is to be refuſed, ſo nothing is to be abuſed. We may live to want what we careleſsly waſte.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 15—17. No ſon ſhould be abandoned by his father, till he manifeſtly appear to be abandoned of God, which is hard to ſay of any while there is life.

Ver. 18—23. In the education of children, great care ſhould be taken, both to ſuppreſs all inclinations to drunkenneſs, and to keep them out of the way of temptations to it; in order hereunto they ſhould be poſſeſſed betimes with a dread and deteſtation of that beaſtly ſin, and taught betimes to deny themſelves.

There is nothing that draws men into all manner of wickedneſs, and hardens them in it, more certainly and fatally, than drunkenneſs doth. When men take to drink they forget the law, they forget all law, Prov. xxxi. 5. even that fundamental law of honouring parents.

Thoſe that give up themſelves to vice and wickedneſs, and will not be reclaimed, forfeit their intereſt in the natural affections of their neareſt relations.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 5—13. Note, 1. It is of great conſequence that love be kept up between huſband and wife, and that every thing be very carefully avoided which might make them ſtrange one to another, eſpecially at firſt; for in that relation, where there is not the love that ſhould be, there is an inlet ready to abundance of guilt and grief.

2. One of the duties of that relation is, to chear up one another, under the cares and croſſes that happen, as helpers of each others' joy; for a chearful heart doth good like a medicine.

Ver. 14—22. It is a greater ſin than moſt people think it is, and will be found ſo in the great day, to put hardſhips upon poor ſervants, labourers, and workmen, that we employ. God will do them right, if men do not.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1—4. Here is a charge to huſbandmen not to hinder their cattle from eating when they were working, if meat were within their reach. That which makes this law very remarkable above its fellows (and which countenances the like application of other ſuch laws) is, that it is twice quoted in the New Teſtament, to ſhew, that it is the duty of the people to give their miniſters a comfortable maintenance, 1 Cor. ix. 9. 10. and 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. It teacheth us, in the letter of it, to make much of the brute creatures that ſerve us, and to allow them not only the neceſſary ſupports of life, but the advantages of their labour; and thus we muſt learn not only to be juſt, but kind to all that are employed for our good; not only to maintain, but to encourage them, eſpecially thoſe that labour among us in the word and doctrine, and ſo are employed for the good of our better part.

Ver. 13—19. Here is a law againſt deceitful weights and meaſures. They muſt not only not *uſe* them, but they muſt not *have* them; not have them in the bag, not have them in the houſe, for if they had them they would be ſtrongly tempted to uſe them. Fraud and injuſtice will expoſe us to the curſe of God. Not only unrighteouſneſs itſelf, but all that do unrighteouſly are *an abomination to the Lord.* And miſerable is that man that is abhorred

by his Maker. How hateful, particularly, all the arts of deceit are to God. Solomon ſeveral times obſerves, Prov. xi. 1.—xx. 10, 23. and the apoſtle tells us, *that the Lord is the avenger of all ſuch* as over-reach and *defraud in any matter*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 6.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 1—11. Here is a good work ordered to be done, and that is the preſenting a baſket of their firſt-fruits to God every year. Now, from this law we may learn,

1. To acknowledge God as the giver of all thoſe good things which are the ſupport and comfort of our natural life, and therefore to ſerve and honour him with them.

2. To deny ourſelves. What is firſt ripe we are moſt fond of: thoſe that are nice and curious, expect to be ſerved with each fruit at its firſt coming in; *my ſoul deſireth the firſt ripe fruits*, Micah vii. 1. When therefore God appointed them to lay thoſe by for him, he taught them to prefer the glorifying of his name, before the gratifying of their own appetites and deſires.

3. To give to God the firſt and beſt we have, as thoſe that believe him to be the firſt and beſt of beings. They that conſecrate the days of their youth, and the prime of their time, to the ſervice and honour of God, bring him their firſt fruits, and

with ſuch offerings he is well pleaſed. *I remember the kindneſs of thy youth.*

When God has made good his promiſes to us, he expects we ſhould own it, to the honour of his faithfulneſs. This is like giving up the bond, as Solomon doth, 1 Kings viii. 56. *There has not failed one word of all his good promiſe.* And our creature comforts are then doubly ſweet to us when we ſee them flowing to us from the fountain of the promiſe.

The comfort we have in our particular enjoyments, ſhould lead us to be thankful for our ſhare in public peace and plenty: and with preſent mercies we ſhould bleſs God for the *former* mercies we remember, and the *further* mercies we expect and hope for.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1—10. All that have any intereſt in others, or power over them, ſhould uſe it for the ſupport and furtherance of religion among them. Though the ſupreme power of a nation provide never ſo good laws for this purpoſe, if inferior magiſtrates in their places, and miniſters in theirs, and maſters of families in theirs, do not do their offices, it will be all to little effect.

Ver. 11—26. When the law was written to be *ſeen and read by all men*, the ſanctions of it were to be publiſhed; which, to complete the ſolemnity of their covenanting with God, they were deliberately

to declare their approbation of. There were, it ſeems, in Canaan, that part of it which afterwards fell to the lot of Ephraim (Joſhua's tribe) two mountains that lay near together, with a valley between, one called Gerizzim, and the other Ebal.

On the ſides of theſe two mountains which faced one another, all the tribes were to be drawn up, ſix on one ſide, and ſix on the other, ſo that in the valley at the foot of each mountain they came pretty near together, ſo near as that the prieſts ſtanding betwixt them might be heard by thoſe that were next them on both ſides. Then when ſilence was proclaimed, and attention commanded, one of the prieſts, or, perhaps, more at ſome diſtance, from each other, pronounced, with a loud voice, one of the curſes here following, and all the people that ſtood on the ſide and foot of Mount Ebal (thoſe that ſtood further off taking the ſignal from thoſe that ſtood nearer and within hearing) ſaid *Amen:* then the contrary bleſſing was pronounced, Bleſſed is he that doth not ſo or ſo, and thoſe that ſtood on the ſide, and at the foot of Mount Gerizzim, ſaid *Amen.* This could not but affect them very much with the bleſſings and curſes, the promiſes and threatnings, of the law, and not only acquaint all the people with them, but teach them to apply them to themſelves.

The Levites or prieſts, ſuch of them as were appointed for that purpoſe, were to pronounce the curſes as well as the bleſſings. Miniſters muſt preach the terrors of the law, as well as the com-

forts of the goſpel; muſt not only allure people to their duty with the promiſes of a bleſſing, but affright them to it with the threatnings of a curſe.

The curſes are here expreſſed, but not the bleſſings; for as many as were under the law, were under the curſe; but it was an honour reſerved for Chriſt to bleſs us, and ſo to do that for us which *the law could not do*, in that it was weak. In Chriſt's ſermon upon the mount, which was the true mount Gerizzim, we have bleſſings only, Matth. v. 3, &c. The ſolemnity concludes with, a general curſe upon him that confirmeth not, or, as it might be read, that *performeth not all the words of this law to do them.* Leſt thoſe that were guilty of other ſins not mentioned in this commination, ſhould think themſelves ſafe from the curſe, this laſt reaches all; not only thoſe that do the evil which the law forbids; but thoſe alſo who omit the good which the law requires. To this we muſt all ſay *Amen*, owning ourſelves under the curſe, juſtly to have deſerved it, and that we muſt certainly have periſhed for ever under it, if Chriſt had not *redeemed us from the curſe of the law, by being made a curſe for us.*

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 1—14. Obſerve here, what a neceſſary and conſtant dependance we have upon God, both for the continuance and comfort of this life. We need him at every turn, in all the various moments

of life. We cannot be ſafe if he withdraw his protection; nor eaſy if he ſuſpends his favour: but if he bleſs us, go where we will, it is well with us.

We depend upon God and his bleſſing, not only for our yearly corn out of the field, but for our daily bread out of our baſket and ſtore, and therefore are taught to pray for it every day.

From the whole, we learn, though it were well if men would believe it, that religion and piety is the beſt friend to outward proſperity. Though temporal bleſſings do not take up ſo much room in the promiſes of the New Teſtament, as they do in thoſe of the Old, yet it is enough that our Lord Jeſus has given us his word (and ſure we may take his word) that if we *ſeek firſt the kingdom of God, and the righteouſneſs thereof, all other things* ſhall be added to us, as far as infinite wiſdom ſees good, and who can deſire it farther? Matth. vi. 33.

Ver. 15—44. There is no running from God but by running to him; no fleeing from his juſtice but by fleeing to his mercy. See Pſalm xxi. 8. Wherever the ſinner goes, the curſe of God follows him; wherever he is, it reſts upon him. He is curſed *in the city* and *in the field.* The ſtrength of the city cannot ſhelter him from it, the pleaſant air of the country is no fence againſt thoſe peſtilential ſteams.

The curſe here is juſt the reverſe of the bleſſing in the former part of the chapter. Thus, whatever bliſs there is in heaven, there is not only the want

of it, but the contrary to it, in hell. God's judgments can reach the minds of men, to fill them with darkneſs and horror, as well as their bodies and eſtates; and thoſe are the ſoreſt of all judgments, which make men a terror to themſelves, and their own deſtroyers.

Ver. 45—68. It ſhould ſeem, that, in the former part of this commination, Moſes foretels their captivity in Babylon, and the calamities which introduced and attended that, by which ever after their return, they were brought to that low and poor condition, that their enemies ſhould be the *head* and they the *tail:* but here in this latter part he foretels their laſt deſtruction, by the Romans, and their diſperſion thereupon. And the preſent deplorable ſtate of the Jewiſh nation, and of all that have incorporated themſelves with them, by embracing their religion, doth ſo fully and exactly anſwer this prediction, that it ſerves for an inconteſtible proof of the truth of prophecy, and conſequently of the divine authority of the ſcripture. And this laſt deſtruction being repreſented here more dreadful than the former, ſhews that their ſin in rejecting Chriſt and his goſpel, was more heinous and more provoking to God than idolatry itſelf.

God threatened them with a miſerable famine, which would prevail to that degree, that for want of food, they ſhould kill and eat their own children. This threatening was fulfilled in the letter of it more than once, to the perpetual reproach of the Jewiſh

nation. Never was the like done either by Greek or Barbarian, but in the ſiege of Samaria, a woman *boiled her own ſon*, 2 Kings vi. 28, 29. And it is ſpoken of as commonly done among them in the ſiege of Jeruſalem by the Babylonians. Lam. iv. 10. And in the laſt ſiege by the Romans, *Joſephus* tells us of a noble woman that killed and ate her own child, through the extremity of the famine; and when ſhe had eaten one half ſecretly, that ſhe might have it to herſelf, the mob ſmelling meat, got into the houſe, to whom ſhe ſhewed the other half, which ſhe had kept till another time, inviting them to ſhare with her.

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 10—29. Note, 1. It is no new thing for God to bring deſolating judgments upon a people that in profeſſion are near to him, Amos iii. 2.

2. He never doth this, but there is a good reaſon why and wherefore he doth it.

3. It concerns us to inquire into the reaſon, that we may give glory to God, and take warning to ourſelves.

God never forſakes any till they firſt forſake him; but thoſe that deſert the God of their fathers, are juſtly caſt out of the inheritance of their fathers.

We are directed and encouraged diligently to inquire into that which God has made known; things *revealed belong to us and to our children.*

Note, 1. Though God has kept much of his counſel ſecret, yet there is enough revealed to ſatisfy and ſave us. He has *kept back nothing that is profitable for us*, but that only which it is good for us to be ignorant of.

2. We ought to acquaint ourſelves, and our children too, with the things of God that are revealed. We are not only allowed to ſearch into them, but are concerned to do ſo; they are things in which we and ours are nearly intereſted. They are the rules we are to live by, the grants we are to live upon; and therefore we are to learn them diligently ourſelves, and to teach them diligently to our children.

3. All our knowledge muſt be in order to practice, for this is the end of all divine revelation, not to furniſh us with curious ſubjects of ſpeculation and diſcourſe, with which to entertain ourſelves and our friends, *but that we may do all the words of this law*, and be bleſſed in our deed.

CHAP. XXXI.

Ver. 1—8. It is a great encouragement to a people, when inſtead of ſome uſeful inſtruments that are removed, God raiſeth up others to carry on his work.

Thoſe ſhall ſpeed well that have God with them; and therefore they ought to be of good courage.

Ver. 9—13. The church has received abundance of advantage by the writing, as well as by the

preaching, of divine things: faith comes not only by hearing, but by reading. The ſame care that was taken of the law, thanks be to God, is taken of the goſpel too. Soon after it was preached it was written, that it may reach to them on whom the ends of the world ſhall come.

CHAP. XXXII.

Ver. 1—6. The word preached is then likely to profit, when it comes gently, and ſweetly inſinuates itſelf into the hearts and affections of the hearers.

Ver. 7—14. The authentic hiſtories of ancient times are of ſingular uſe, and eſpecially the hiſtory of the church in its infancy, both the Old Teſtament and the New Teſtament church.

Ver. 26—38. God's time to appear for the deliverance of his people is, when things are at the worſt with them.

God tries his people's faith, and ſtirs up prayer, by letting things go to the worſt, and then magnifies his own power, and fills the faces of his enemies with ſhame, and the hearts of his people with ſo much the greater joy, by reſcuing them out of extremity, as *brands out of the burning*.

Thoſe who truſt to any rock but God, will find it ſand in the day of their diſtreſs: it will fail them when they moſt need it.

Ver. 39—43. True religion brings us acquainted with true joy; ſo great a miſtake are they under, that think it tends to make men melancholy.

Ver. 44—52. It is a great encouragement to us when we die, to think of our friends that have gone before us through that darkſome valley, eſpecially of Chriſt, our elder brother and great high-prieſt.

God ſends Moſes up to a high hill from thence to take a view of the land of Canaan and then die. The remembrance of his ſin might make death terrible, but the ſight God gave him of Canaan took off the terror of it, as it was a token of God's being reconciled to him, and a plain indication to him, that though his ſin ſhut him out of the earthly Canaan, yet it ſhould not deprive him of that better country, which in this world can only be ſeen, and that with an eye of faith.

Note, Thoſe may die with comfort and eaſe whenever God calls for them, notwithſtanding the ſins they remember againſt themſelves, who have a believing proſpect and a well grounded hope of eternal life beyond death.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Ver. 1—5. The law of God written in the heart, is a certain evidence of the love of God ſhed abroad there.

God has *all his ſaints in his hand*, and though there are *ten thouſands of his ſaints*, yet his hand, with which he meaſures the waters, is large enough, and ſtrong enough to hold them all; and we may be

ſure that *none can* pluck them out of his hand, John x. 28.

He is indeed a rich man in whom the word of Chriſt dwells richly.

Ver. 6, 7. The voice of prayer ſhould always be attended with the hand of endeavour, and then we may expect proſperity.

Ver. 8—11. *Thummim* ſignifies integrity, and *Urim*, illumination. Let theſe be with thy holy-one, i. e. Lord, let the high-prieſt ever be both an upright man and an underſtanding man. A good prayer to be put up for the miniſters of the goſpel, that they may have clear heads and honeſt hearts. Light and ſincerity make a complete miniſter.

Preaching is neceſſary not only for the firſt planting of churches, but for the preſerving and edifying of churches when they are planted. See Ezek. xliv. 23, 24.

Ver. 18—21. The providence of God as it variouſly appoints the bounds of men's habitations, ſome in the city, and ſome in the country, ſome in the ſea-ports, and ſome in the inland towns, ſo it wiſely diſpoſeth men's inclinations to different employments for the good of the public, as each member of the body is ſituated and qualified for the ſervice of the whole. It was for the common good of Iſrael, that the men of Zebulun were merchants, and that the men of Iſſachar were huſbandmen.

Men of great buſineſs, or large converſation,

ſhould wiſely and zealouſly endeavour to recommend the practice of ſerious godlineſs to thoſe with whom they converſe, and among whom their buſineſs lies.

Thoſe that have not opportunity, as Zebulun had, of bringing into the church thoſe that are without, may yet be very ſerviceable to its intereſt, by helping to quicken, encourage, and build up thoſe that are within. And it is a good work to call people to God's ordinances, to put thoſe in remembrance that are forgetful, and to ſtir up thoſe that are ſlothful, who will follow but care not to lead.

Ver. 22—25. *As thy days ſo ſhall thy ſtrength be*, is a promiſe ſure to all the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham, that God will wiſely proportion their graces and comforts to the ſervices and ſufferings he calls them to.

Have they work appointed them? they ſhall have ſtrength to do it. Have they burdens appointed them? they ſhall have ſtrength to bear them; and never be *tempted above that they are able. Faithful is he that has* thus *promiſed*, and hath *cauſed us to hope* in this promiſe.

Ver. 26—29. When we are expecting that God ſhould bleſs us in doing well for us, we muſt bleſs him by ſpeaking well of him: and one way of praiſing God, is by acknowledging that there is none like him.

How low ſoever the people of God are at any time brought; *everlaſting arms are underneath* them,

to keep the ſpirit from ſinking, from fainting, and the faith from failing, even when they are preſſed above meaſure. The everlaſting covenant, and the everlaſting conſolations that flow from it, are indeed everlaſting arms, with which believers have been wonderfully ſuſtained, and kept chearful in the worſt of times. Divine grace is ſufficient for them. 2 Cor. xii. 9.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Ver. 1—4. Moſes went up to the top of Piſgah to die.

When he knew the place of his death he was ſo far from declining it, that he chearfully mounted a ſteep hill to come at it. Note, thoſe that through grace are well acquainted with another world, and have been much converſant with it, need not be afraid to leave this.

God ſhewed Moſes the promiſed land from the top of Piſgah, juſt before his death.

Sometimes God reſerves the brighteſt diſcoveries of his grace to his people, to be the ſupport of their dying moments.

Thoſe may leave this world with a great deal of chearfulneſs that die in the faith of Chriſt, and in the hope of heaven, and with Canaan in their eye. Having thus ſeen the ſalvation of God we may well ſay, *Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace.*

Ver. 5—8. The *ſervants of the Lord*, when they

have done all their other work, muſt die at laſt in obedience to their Maſter, and be freely willing to go home whenever he ſends for them. Acts xxi. 13.

God himſelf buried Moſes, viz. by the miniſtry of angels, which made this funeral, though very private, yet very magnificent. Note, God takes care of the dead bodies of his ſervants; as their death is precious, ſo is their duſt, not a grain of it ſhall be loſt; but the covenant with it ſhall be remembered.

We muſt learn not to be over ſolicitous about the place of our burial: if the ſoul be at reſt with God, it is no great matter where the body reſts.

The years of the life of Moſes were three forties: the firſt forty he lived a courtier, at eaſe and in honour in Pharaoh's court; the ſecond forty he lived a poor deſolate ſhepherd in Midian; the third forty he lived a king in Jeſhurun, in honour and power, but allayed with a great deal of care and toil. So changeable is the world we live in, and allayed with ſuch mixtures. The world before us is unmixed and unchangeable.

The loſs of good men, eſpecially good governors, is to be much lamented and laid to heart: thoſe are ſtupid who do not conſider it.

Yet the *ending of the days of weeping and mourning* for Moſes is an intimation, that, how great ſoever our loſſes have been, we muſt not abandon ourſelves to perpetual grief: we muſt ſuffer the wound at leaſt to heal up in time.

Ver. 9—12. We have here a very honourable encomium both of Moſes and Joſhua: each have their praiſe and ſhould have. It is ungrateful ſo to magnify our living friends, as to forget the merits of thoſe that are gone, to whoſe memories there is a debt of honour due. All the reſpects muſt not be paid to the riſing ſun: and on the other hand, it is unjuſt ſo to cry up the merits of thoſe that are gone, as to deſpiſe the benefit we have in thoſe that ſurvive and ſucceed them.

JOSHUA.

CHAPTER I. VER. 1—9.

NOTE, 1. The removal of uſeful men ſhould quicken the ſurvivors to be ſo much the more diligent in doing good. Such and ſuch are dead and we muſt die ſhortly, therefore let us work while it is day.

2. It is a great mercy to a people, if when uſeful men are taken away in the midſt of their uſefulneſs, others are raiſed up in their ſtead to go on where they broke off. Joſhua muſt ariſe to finiſh what Moſes began: thus the latter generations enter into the labours of the former. And thus Chriſt, our Joſhua, doth that for us which could never be done by the law of Moſes, *juſtifies*, Acts xiii. 39. and ſanctifies, Rom. viii. 3. The life of Moſes made way for Joſhua, and prepared the people for what was to be done by him.

Thus the law is a *ſchoolmaſter to bring us to Chriſt:* and then the death of Moſes made room for Joſhua; thus we are dead to the law our firſt huſband that we may be *married to Chriſt*, Rom. vii. 4.

If ever any man's buſineſs might have excuſed him from meditation and other acts of devotion, one would think Joſhua's might at this time. It was a great truſt that was lodged in his hands, the care of

it was enough to fill him if he had had ten ſouls, and yet he muſt find time and thoughts for meditation. Whatever affairs of this world we have to mind, we muſt not neglect the one thing needful.

They that make the word of God their rule, and conſcientiouſly walk by that rule, ſhall both do well and ſpeed well.

When we are in the way of our duty, we have reaſon to be *ſtrong and very courageous*, and it will help very much to animate and embolden us to keep our eye upon the divine warrant, and to hear God, ſaying, *Have not I commanded thee?* I will therefore help thee, ſucceed thee, accept thee, reward thee.

Ver. 10—15. We greatly honour the truth of God, when we ſtagger not at the promiſe of God. When God by his providence hath given us reſt, we ought to conſider how we may honour him with the advantages of it; and what ſervice we may do to our brethren who are unſettled, or not ſo well ſettled as we are.

Ver. 16—18. Prayers and ſupplications are to be made for all in authority, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. And the beſt thing we can aſk of God for our magiſtrates is, that they may have the preſence of God with them: that will make them bleſſings to us, ſo that in ſeeking this for them we conſult our own intereſt.

It very much heartens thoſe that lead in a good

work, to ſee thoſe that follow, follow with a good will. Joſhua, though of approved valour, did not take it as an affront, but as a great kindneſs, for the people to bid him be ſtrong and of a good courage.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1—7. Joſhua is ſure he has God with him, and yet ſends men before him ſecretly *to view the land, even Jericho.* Faith in God's promiſe ought not to ſuperſede, but encourage, our diligence in the uſe of proper means. We do not truſt God, but tempt him, if our expectations ſlacken our endeavours.

Rahab is here called a *harlot*, and ſhe is ſo called in the New Teſtament, where both her faith and her good works are praiſed; to teach us,

1. That the greatneſs of ſin is no bar to pardoning mercy, if it be truly repented of.

2. That there are many, who before their converſion were very wicked and vile, and yet afterwards came to great eminency in faith and holineſs.

3. Even thoſe that through grace have repented of the ſins of their youth, muſt expect to bear the reproach of them, and when they hear of their old faults muſt renew their repentance; and as an evidence of that, hear of them patiently.

Ver. 8—21. Covenants muſt be made with care, and we muſt ſwear in judgment, leſt we find our-

ſelves perplexed and intangled when it is too late *after vows to make inquiry*. They that will be conſcientious in keeping their promiſes will be cautious in making them, and perhaps may inſert conditions which others may think frivolous.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1—6. We muſt go on in the way of our duty, though we foreſee difficulties, truſting God to help us through them when we come to them.

The work of miniſters is to hold forth the word of life, and to take care of the adminiſtration of thoſe ordinances, which are the tokens of God's preſence and the inſtruments of his power and grace; and herein they muſt go before the people of God in their way to heaven.

The Iſraelites muſt follow the prieſts as far as they carried the ark, but no farther: ſo we muſt follow our miniſters only as they follow Chriſt.

While we are here we muſt expect and prepare for unuſual events, to paſs ways that we have not paſſed before: and much more when we go hence. Our way through the *valley of the ſhadow of death*, is a way we have not gone before, which makes it the more formidable. But if we have the aſſurance of God's preſence we need not fear, that will furniſh us with ſuch ſtrength as we never had, when we come to do a work we never did.

Ver. 7—13. The children of Iſrael paſſed over

Jordan in ſuch a way as had no precedent but the dividing of the Red-ſea: and that miracle is here repeated, to ſhew that God has the ſame power to finiſh the ſalvation of his people, that he had to begin it, for he is the *Alpha* and the *Omega*; and that the Word of the Lord, the eſſential eternal Word, was as truly with Joſhua, as he was with Moſes.

Obſerve, The ark of the covenant muſt be their guide. During the reign of Moſes the cloud was their guide, but now, in Joſhua's reign, the ark; both viſible ſigns of God's preſence and preſidency. Divine grace under the Moſaic diſpenſation was wrapt up as in a cloud, and covered with a veil; but by Chriſt, our Joſhua, it is revealed in the ark of the covenant unveiled.

They are told that the ark ſhould *paſs before them into Jordan.* God would not appoint them to go any where, but where he himſelf would go before them, and go with them; and they might ſafely venture, even into Jordan itſelf, if the ark of the covenant lead them. While we make God's precepts our rule, his promiſes our ſtay, and his providence our guide; we need not dread the greateſt difficulties we may meet with in the way. That promiſe is ſure to all the ſeed, Iſa. xliii. 2. *When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee.* God's glorious appearances for his church and people, ought to be improved by us for the encouragement of our faith and hope for the future. *As for*

God his work is perfect. If Jordan's flood cannot keep the Iſraelites out, Canaan's force cannot turn them out again.

The river Jordan was now broader and deeper than uſually it was at other times of the year. Note, Though the oppoſition given to the ſalvation of God's people, have all imaginable advantages, yet God can and will conquer it. Let the banks of Jordan be filled to the brink, filled till they run over, it is as eaſy to omnipotence to divide them, and dry them up, as if they were never ſo narrow, never ſo ſhallow; it is all one with the Lord.

Ver. 14—17. When we have finiſhed our pilgrimage through this wilderneſs, death will be like this Jordan between us and the heavenly Canaan; but the ark of the covenant has prepared us a way through it: it is the laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1—9. God's works of wonder ought to be kept in everlaſting remembrance, and means deviſed for preſerving the memorial of them.

Ver. 20—24. Thoſe that will be wiſe when they are old, muſt be inquiſitive when they are young.

It is the duty of parents to acquaint their children betimes with the word and works of God, that they may be trained up in the way they ſhould go.

God's mercies to our anceſtors were mercies to us: and we ſhould take all occaſions to revive the remembrance of the great things God did for our fathers *in the days of old.*

It greatly magnifies later mercies to compare them with former mercies, for by making the compariſon it appears that God is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever.

Later mercies ſhould bring to remembrance former ones, and revive our thankfulneſs for them.

In all the inſtructions and informations parents give their children, they ſhould have this chiefly in their eye, to teach and engage them to *fear God for ever.* Serious godlineſs is the beſt learning.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 10—12. The word and ordinances of God are ſpiritual *manna*, with which God nouriſheth his people in this wilderneſs, and though often forfeited, yet they are continued while we are here; but when we come to the heavenly Canaan, this manna will ceaſe, for we ſhall have no longer need of it.

Ver. 13—15. We may then expect the diſcoveries of the divine grace, when we are found in the way of our duty, and are diligent and ſincere in our attendance on holy ordinances.

We have reaſon to think that the man who appeared to Joſhua, was the *Son of God, the eternal*

Word, who, before he aſſumed the human nature, frequently appeared in a human ſhape. Joſhua gave him divine honours, and he received them, which a created angel would not have done, and he is called Jehovah, chap. vi. 2. He here appeared as a ſoldier, with *his ſword drawn in his hand.* To Abraham in his tent, he appeared as a traveller; to Joſhua in the field, as a man of war. Chriſt will be to his people what their faith expects and deſires.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 6—16. God's miniſters, by ſounding the jubilee trumpet of the everlaſting goſpel, which proclaims liberty and victory, muſt encourage the good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt in their ſpiritual warfare.

The trumpets they uſed in ſurrounding the walls of Jericho, were not thoſe ſilver trumpets which were appointed to be made for their ordinary ſervice, but trumpets of rams' horns. Thus by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, fitly compared to the ſounding of theſe rams' horns, the devil's kingdom is thrown down, and the *weapons of our warfare*, though they are not carnal, nor ſeem to a carnal eye likely to bring any thing to paſs, yet they are *mighty through God*, to the pulling down of *ſtrong holds*, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

Ver. 17—27. The God of heaven eaſily can, and certainly will, break down all the oppoſing power of his and the church's enemies. Gates of

braſs and bars of iron are before him but as *ſtraw and rotten wood*, Iſa. xlv. 1, 2. Thus ſhall Satan's kingdom fall, nor ſhall any proſper that harden themſelves againſt God.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 6—9. The methods of providence are often intricate and perplexing, and ſuch as the wiſeſt and beſt of men know not what to ſay to; but they ſhall know hereafter, John xiii. 7.

Even good men, when things go againſt them a little, are too apt to fear the worſt, and make harder concluſions than there is reaſon for.

Nothing is more grievous to a gracious ſoul than diſhonour done to God's name.

Ver. 16—26. See in Achan's caſe,

1. The folly of thoſe that promiſe themſelves ſecrecy in ſin. The righteous God has many ways of bringing to light the hidden works of darkneſs, and ſo bringing to ſhame and ruin thoſe that continue their fellowſhip with thoſe unfruitful works.

2. How much it is our concern, when God is contending with us, to find out what the cauſe of action is, what the particular ſin is, that, like Achan, troubles our camp. We muſt thus examine ourſelves and carefully review the records of conſcience, that we may find out the accurſed thing, and pray earneſtly with holy Job, *Lord ſhew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me.*

In confeſſing ſin, as we take ſhame to ourſelves, ſo we give glory to God, as a righteous God, owning him juſtly diſpleaſed with us, and as a good God who will not improve our confeſſions as evidences againſt us; but is faithful and juſt to forgive, even when we are brought to own that he would be faithful and juſt, if he ſhould puniſh. It becomes penitents, in the confeſſion of their ſin to God, to be very particular, not only "I have ſinned, but in this and that inſtance I have ſinned;" reflecting with regret upon all the ſteps that led to the ſin, and all the circumſtances that aggravated it and made it exceedingly ſinful, *thus and thus have I done.*

Sin is a very troubleſome thing, not only to the ſinner himſelf, but to all about him. The righteous God will certainly *recompence tribulation to thoſe that trouble his people*, 2 Theſſ. i. 6. Thoſe that are troubleſome ſhall be troubled.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1, 2. The pious devotion of God's people, ſometimes provokes and exaſperates their enemies more than any thing elſe.

Ver. 15—21. Let the conduct of Joſhua, and the princes of the congregation of Iſrael, in ſteadily adhering to the oath they had taken to the Gibeonites, convince us how religiouſly we ought to perform our promiſes, and make good our bargains, and what conſcience we ought to make of our words.

when they are once given. If a covenant obtained by ſo many lies and deceits yet might not be broken, ſhall we think to evade the obligation of thoſe that have been made with all poſſible honeſty and fairneſs? If the fraud of others will not juſtify or excuſe our falſehood, certainly the honeſty of others, in dealing with us, will aggravate and condemn our diſhoneſty in dealing with them.

Ver. 22—27. Under the greateſt provocations it is our wiſdom and duty to keep our temper, and to bridle our paſſion. A juſt cauſe needs not anger to defend it, and a bad one is never made the better by it.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1—6. When our ſpiritual enemies ſet themſelves in array againſt us, and threaten to ſwallow us up, let us, by faith and prayer, apply ourſelves to Chriſt, our Joſhua, for ſtrength and ſuccour, as St. Paul did, and we ſhall receive the ſame anſwer of peace, *my grace is ſufficient for thee*, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

Ver. 7—14. *He that believeth doth not make haſte to anticipate* providence, but doth make haſte to *attend it*, with a diligent, not a diſtruſtful ſpeed.

It cannot be imagined ſuch a thing as Joſhua's praying that the ſun and moon might ſtand ſtill, ſhould enter into his mind, if God had not put it there; but even in the Old Teſtament Saints, *the Spirit made interceſſion according to the will of God.*

What God will give he inclines the hearts of his praying people to aſk, and for what he will do he will be inquired of by them, Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1—9. We are here entering upon the ſtory of another campaign that Joſhua made, and it was a glorious one, no leſs illuſtrious than the former in the ſucceſs of it; though in reſpect of miracles, it was inferior to it in glory. The wonders God then wrought for them, were to animate and encourage them to act vigorouſly themſelves. Thus the war carried on, by the preaching of the goſpel, againſt Satan's kingdom, was at firſt forwarded by miracles; but the war being by them ſufficiently proved to be of God, the managers of it are now left to the ordinary aſſiſtances of divine grace in the uſe of the ſword of the Spirit, and muſt not expect hailſtones, or the ſtanding ſtill of the ſun.

The oneneſs of the church's enemies ſhould ſhame the church's friends out of their diſcords and diviſions, and engage them to be one. Joſhua was remarkable for his courage; it was his maſter-grace, and yet, it ſeems, he had need to be again and again cautioned not to be afraid. Freſh dangers and difficulties make it neceſſary to fetch in freſh ſupports and comforts from the word of God, which we have always nigh unto us, to be made uſe of in every time of need.

God proportions our trials to our ſtrength, and our ſtrength to our trials.

Ver. 15—23. The ſtruggle of the Iſraelites with the Anakims was reſerved for the latter end of the war, when they were become more expert in the arts of war, and had had more experience of the power and goodneſs of God.

Note, God ſometimes reſerves the ſharpeſt trials of his people by affliction and temptation for the latter end of their days.

God's word and his works, if viewed and conſidered together, will mutually illuſtrate each other.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1—15. They that follow God fully when they are young, ſhall have both the credit and comfort of it when they are old; and the reward of it for ever in the heavenly Canaan.

Note, 1. While we live, it is God that keeps us alive; by his power he protects us from death, and by his bounty he ſupplies us continually with the ſupports and comforts of life. He *holdeth our ſoul in life.*

2. The longer we live the more ſenſible we ſhould be of God's goodneſs to us in keeping us alive: his care in prolonging our frail lives; his patience in prolonging our forfeited lives.

3. The death of many others round about us, ſhould make us the more thankful to God for ſparing us and keeping us alive.

Singular piety ſhall be crowned with ſingular favours.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 13—19. Achſah gained her point, in the requeſt ſhe preſented to her father Caleb. He gave her what ſhe aſked, and perhaps more, for *he gave her the upper ſprings and the nether ſprings.* Two fields, ſo called from the ſprings that were in them; as we commonly diſtinguiſh between the higher field and the lower field. Thoſe who underſtand it but of one field, watered both with the rain of heaven, and the ſprings that iſſued out of the bowels of the earth, give countenance to the alluſion we commonly make to this, when we pray for ſpiritual and heavenly bleſſings which relate to our ſouls, as bleſſings of the *upper ſprings*; and thoſe which relate to the body, and the life that now is, as bleſſings of the *nether ſprings.*

From this ſtory we learn,

1. That it is no breach of the tenth commandment, moderately to deſire thoſe comforts and conveniences of this life, which we ſee attainable in a fair and regular way.

2. That huſbands and wives ſhould mutually adviſe, and jointly agree about that which is for the common good of their family; and much more ſhould they concur in aſking of their heavenly Father, the beſt bleſſings, thoſe of the upper ſprings.

3. That parents muſt never think that loſt which

is beſtowed upon their children for their real advantage; but muſt be free in giving them portions as well as maintenance, eſpecially when they are dutiful. Caleb had ſons, 1 Chron. iv. 15. and yet gave thus liberally to his daughter. Thoſe parents forget themſelves and their relation, who grudge their children what is convenient for them, when they can conveniently part with it.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 49—51. Before this account of the dividing of the land of Canaan is ſolemnly cloſed up in the laſt verſe, which intimates that the thing was done to the ſatisfaction of all, here is account of the particular inheritance aſſigned to Joſhua.

He was laſt ſerved, though the eldeſt and greateſt man of all Iſrael, and who having commanded in the conqueſt of Canaan, might have demanded the firſt ſettlement in it for himſelf and his family. But he would make it to appear that in all he did he ſought the good of his country, and not any private intereſt of his own. He was content to be unfixed till he ſaw them all placed: and herein is a great example to all in public places, to prefer the common welfare before their particular ſatisfaction. Let the public firſt be ſerved.

The children of Iſrael are ſaid to *give* Joſhua his inheritance, which ſpeaks his humility, that he would not take it to himſelf without the people's con-

ſent and approbation; as if he would thereby own himſelf though *major ſingulis* yet *minor univerſis* *, and would hold even the eſtate of his family, under God, by the grant of the people.

Joſhua's city was one that muſt be built before it was fit to be dwelt in. While others dwelt in houſes which they builded not, Joſhua muſt build for himſelf, that he might be a pattern of induſtry and contentment with mean things; ſuch buildings as he could haſtily run up, without curioſity or magnificence. Our Lord Jeſus thus came and *dwelt among us*, not in pomp, but poverty; providing reſt for us, yet himſelf not having where to lay his head. Even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 7—9. Some obſerve a ſignificancy in the names of theſe cities with application to Chriſt our refuge. *Kedeſh* ſignifies holy, and our refuge is the holy Jeſus. *Shechem* a ſhoulder, and the government is upon his ſhoulder. *Hebron*, fellowſhip, and believers are called into the fellowſhip of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. *Bezer*, a fortification, for he is a ſtrong hold to all them that truſt in him. *Ramoth*, high or exalted, for him hath God exalted with his own right hand. *Golan*, joy or exultation, for in him all the ſaints are juſtified and ſhall glory.

* Though greater than any individual yet leſs than the body united.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 43—45. We have here the concluſion of this whole matter, the foregoing hiſtory ſummed up, and to make it appear the more bright, compared with the promiſe, of which it was the full accompliſhment. God's word and his works mutually illuſtrate each other. The performance makes the promiſe appear very true, and the promiſe makes the performance appear very kind.

The inviolable truth of God's promiſe, and the performance of it to the utmoſt, is what all the ſaints have been ready to bear their teſtimony to; and, if in any thing it has ſeemed to come ſhort, they have been as ready to own that they themſelves muſt bear all the blame.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1—9. Though the affections of the Reubenites and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manaſſeh to their families, and concern for their affairs, could not but make them, after ſo long abſence, very deſirous to return, yet, like good ſoldiers, they would not move till they had orders from their general. So though our heavenly Father's houſe above be never ſo deſirable (it is Biſhop *Hall*'s alluſion) yet we muſt ſtay on earth till our warfare be accompliſhed; wait for a due diſcharge, and not anticipate the time of our removal.

Ver. 10—20. Many an unhappy ſtrife would be prevented, or ſoon ended, by an impartial and favourable inquiry into that which is the matter of the offence. The rectifying of miſtakes and miſunderſtandings, and the ſetting of miſ-conſtrued words and actions in a true light, would be the moſt effectual way to accommodate both private and public quarrels, and bring them to a happy period.

The rememberance of great ſins committed formerly, ſhould engage us to ſtand upon our guard againſt the leaſt occaſions and beginnings of ſin; for the way of ſin is down hill.

Ver. 21—29. In every thing we do in religion, it highly concerns us to approve ourſelves to God in our integrity therein, remembering that he knows the heart.

When we fall under the cenſures of men, it is very comfortable to be able with a humble confidence to appeal to God concerning our ſincerity. See 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

If our ſincerity be known to God, we ſhould ſtudy likewiſe to let others know it by its fruits, eſpecially thoſe, who though they miſtake us, yet ſhew a zeal for the glory of God, as the ten tribes here did.

Though the form and profeſſion of godlineſs is kept up by many without the life and power of it, yet the life and power of it will not long be kept up without the form and profeſſion of it. They who have themſelves found the comfort and benefit of

God's ordinances, cannot but desire to preserve and perpetuate the entail of them upon their seed; and use all possible precautions that their children after them may not be *made to cease from following the Lord*, or be looked upon as having no part in him.

Ver. 30—34. Our brethrens' constancy in religion, their zeal for the power of godliness, and their keeping *the unity of the spirit* in faith and love, notwithstanding the jealousies conceived of them as breaking the *unity of the church*, is that which we should be very glad to be satisfied of, and should make the matter both of our rejoicing, and of our thanksgiving. Let God have the glory of it, and let us take the comfort of it.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1—14. We must never think our work for God done, till our life is done; and if he lengthen out our days beyond what we thought, we must conclude, it is because he has some farther service for us to do.

Ver. 15—28. Joshua resolves

1. For himself, *As for me I will serve the Lord.* Note, The service of God is nothing below the greatest of men. It is so far from being a diminution and disparagement to princes, and those of the first rank, to be religious, that it is their greatest honour, and adds the brightest crown of glory to them.

2. For *his house*, i. e. his family, his children

and ſervants, ſuch as were immediately under his eye and care, his inſpection and influence. Joſhua was a ruler, a judge in Iſrael, yet he will not make his neceſſary application to public affairs an excuſe for the neglect of family religion.

Laſtly, He reſolves to do this, whatever others did. Though all the families of Iſrael ſhould revolt from God, and ſerve idols, yet Joſhua and his family will ſtedfaſtly adhere to the God of Iſrael.

Note, Thoſe that reſolve to ſerve God, muſt not ſtick at being ſingular in it, nor be drawn by the crowd to forſake his ſervice. Thoſe that are bound for heaven, muſt be willing to *ſwim againſt the ſtream*, and muſt not do as the moſt do, but as the beſt do.

JUDGES.

CHAPTER I. VER. 1—8.

OBSERVE, how juſtly Adonibezek was treated as he had treated others. Thus the righteous God ſometimes in his providence makes the puniſhment to anſwer the ſin, and obſerves an equality in his judgments. The ſpoiler ſhall be ſpoiled, and the *treacherous dealer dealt treacherouſly with*, Iſa. xxxiii. 1. And they that *ſhewed no mercy*, ſhall have *no mercy ſhewed* them, James ii. 13. See Rev. xiii. 10. xviii. 6.

How honeſtly he owned the righteouſneſs of God herein. *As I have done, ſo God has requited me.* See the power of conſcience, when God by his judgments awakens it, how it brings ſin to remembrance, and ſubſcribes to the juſtice of God.

He that in his pride had ſet God at defiance, now yields to him, and reflects with as much regret upon the kings under his table, as ever he had looked upon them with pleaſure when he had them there.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 31. See here, 1. That God can make thoſe eminently ſerviceable to his glory and his church's good, whoſe extraction, education, and employment,

is very mean and obſcure. He that has the reſidue of the Spirit, could, when he pleaſed, make ploughmen judges and generals, and fiſhermen apoſtles.

2. It is no matter how weak the weapon is, if God direct and ſtrengthen the arm. An ox-goad, when God pleaſeth, ſhall do more than Goliah's ſword. And ſometimes he chooſeth to work by ſuch unlikely means, that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 4—9. Deborah's name ſignifies a *bee*, and ſhe anſwered her name by her induſtry, ſagacity, and great uſefulneſs to the public, her ſweetneſs to her friends and ſharpneſs to her enemies.

Deborah promiſeth to go with Barak. No toil nor peril ſhall diſcourage her from doing the utmoſt that becomes her to do for the ſervice of her country.

She would not ſend him where ſhe would not go herſelf. Thoſe that in God's name call others to their duty, ſhould be very ready to aſſiſt them in it.

Ver. 10—16. Note, 1. In every undertaking it is good to be ſatisfied that God goes before us, that we are in the way of our duty and under his direction.

2. If we have ground to hope that God goes before us, we ought to go on with courage and chearfulneſs. Be not diſmayed at the difficulties thou meeteſt with in reſiſting Satan, in ſerving God, or in ſuffering for him, for *is not the Lord gone out before thee*? Follow him then fully.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 12—23. *The ſtars in their courſes fought againſt Siſera.* Thoſe whom God is an enemy to, the whole creation is at war with.

Many are kept from doing their duty by the fear of trouble, the love of eaſe, and an inordinate affection to their worldly buſineſs and advantage. Narrow ſelfiſh ſpirits care not what comes of the intereſts of God's church, ſo they can but get, keep, and ſave money. *All ſeek their own*, Phil. ii. 21.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 11—24. This angel, which appeared to Gideon, is here called Jehovah, the incommunicable name of God, and he ſaith, *I will be with thee.* This divine perſon appeared here to Gideon, and it is obſervable how he found him,

1. Retired; all alone. God often manifeſts himſelf to his people, when they are out of the noiſe and hurry of this world. Silence and ſolitude befriend our communion with God.

2. Employed in threſhing wheat. We put ourſelves in the way of divine viſits, when we employ ourſelves in honeſt buſineſs. Tidings of Chriſt's birth were brought to the ſhepherds, when they were keeping their flocks.

3. Diſtreſſed. He was threſhing his wheat, not

in the threſhing floor, the proper place, but by the wine preſs, in ſome private unſuſpected corner, for fear of the Midianites.

The day of the greateſt diſtreſs is God's time to appear for his people's relief.

It is ſometimes hard, but never impoſſible, to reconcile croſs providences with the preſence of God and his favour.

True faith is often weak, yet it ſhall not be rejected, but encouraged and ſtrengthened. Thoſe who receive commiſſions from God, muſt expect and ſeek for inſtructions from him.

God often chooſeth to do great things by thoſe that are little, eſpecially that are ſo in their own eyes. God delights to advance the humble.

Ver. 25—32. It is good to appear for God when we are called to it, though there be few or none to ſecond us; becauſe God can incline the hearts of thoſe to ſtand by us, from whom we little expect it. Let us do our duty, and then truſt God with our ſafety.

It is bad to commit ſin, but it is great wickedneſs indeed to plead for it, eſpecially to plead for Baal, that idol, whatever it is, which poſſeſſeth that room in the heart which God ſhould have.

Ver. 33—40. Obſerve, God's gracious grant of Gideon's requeſt. See how tender God is of true believers, though they be weak; and how ready to condeſcend to their infirmities, that the bruiſed reed may not be broken, nor the ſmoking flax quenched.

Gideon would have *the fleece wet*, and the *ground* dry; but then, leſt any ſhould object, it is natural for wool, if never ſo little moiſture fall, to drink it in, and retain it, and therefore there was nothing extraordinary in that; though the quantity wrung out was ſufficient to obviate that objection, yet he deſires that next night the ground might be wet and the fleece dry, and it is done; ſo willing is God to give to the heirs of promiſe ſtrong conſolation, Heb. vi. 17, 18. even by two immutable things. He ſuffers himſelf, not only to be prevailed with by their importunities, but even to be preſcribed to by their doubts and diſſatisfactions.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 9—15. Divine conſolations are given to believers, not only ſtrongly but ſeaſonably.

God knows the infirmities of his people, and what great encouragement they may ſometimes take from a ſmall matter; and, therefore, knowing beforehand what would occur to Gideon, in that very part of the camp to which he would go down, he orders him to go down and hearken what they ſaid, that he might the more firmly believe what God ſaid.

Ver. 16—22. *The ſword of the Lord* is all in all to the ſucceſs of *the ſword of Gideon*, yet the ſword of Gideon muſt be employed. Men the inſtruments, and God the principal agent, muſt both be

conſidered in their places; but men, the greateſt and beſt, always in ſubſerviency and ſubordination to God.

Now this method here taken of defeating the Midianites may be alluded to,

1. As typifying the deſtruction of the devil's kingdom in the world, by the preaching of the everlaſting goſpel, the ſounding of that trumpet, and the holding forth of that light out of *earthen veſſels*; for ſuch the miniſters of the goſpel are, in whom the *treaſure of that light* is depoſited, 2 Cor. iv. 6, 7. Thus God choſe the *fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe*; a barley-cake to overthrow the tents of Midian; that the *excellency of the power might be of God only*. The goſpel is a ſword, not in the hand, but in the mouth; the ſword *of the Lord and of Gideon*; of God and Jeſus Chriſt, him that ſits on the throne and the Lamb.

2. As repreſenting the terrors of the great day. So the excellent Biſhop *Hall* applies it. If theſe pitchers, trumpets, and fire-brands, did ſo daunt and diſmay the proud troops of Midian and Amalek, who ſhall be able to ſtand before the laſt terror, when the trumpet of the archangel ſhall ſound, the elements ſhall be on a flame, the heavens paſs away with a great noiſe, and the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend with a ſhout.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 22—28. Many are led into falſe ways, by one falſe ſtep of a good man. Gideon's having an ephod made, became a ſnare to himſelf, abating his zeal for the houſe of God in his old age; and much more to his houſe, who were drawn by it into ſin, and it proved the ruin of the family.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 22—49. Note, 1. Sooner or later God will make inquiſition for blood, and will return it on the heads of thoſe that ſhed it, who ſhall have blood given them to drink; *for they are worthy.*

2. Acceſſaries ſhall be reckoned with, as well as principals, in that and other ſins. The Shechemites that countenanced Abimelech's pretenſions, aided and abetted him in his bloody projects, and avowed the fact, by making him king after he had effected them, muſt fall with him, fall by him, and fall firſt.

3. Thoſe that combine together to do wickedly, are juſtly daſhed in pieces one againſt another. Blood cannot be a laſting cement to any intereſt. It is juſt with God, that thoſe who tempt others to be perfidious, ſhould afterwards be themſelves betrayed by thoſe whom they have taught to be ſo.

Ver. 50—57. We have ſeen the ruin of the She-

chemites completed by the hand of Abimilech, and now it comes to his turn to be reckoned with, who was their leader in villainy.

In the circumſtances which reſpect the death of Abimilech, ſee,

1. His fooliſh pride in laying ſo much to heart his being wounded by a woman. Here was no care taken about his precious ſoul, no prayers to God for his mercy; but very ſolicitous he is to patch up his ſhattered credit: O let it never be ſaid that ſuch a mighty man as Abimelech was killed by a woman! The man was dying, but his pride was alive and ſtrong, and the ſame vain-glorious humour that had governed him all along, appears now at laſt. As God puniſhed his cruelty by the *manner* of his death, ſo he puniſhed his pride by the *inſtrument of it*.

2. His fooliſh project to avoid this diſgrace. Nothing could be more ridiculous: his own ſervant muſt run him through, not to rid him the ſooner out of his pain, but *that men ſay not, a woman ſlew him.* Could he think that this would conceal what the woman had done, and not rather proclaim it the more! Nay, it added to the infamy of his death; for, hereby he becomes a ſelf-murderer. Better have it ſaid, *a woman ſlew him*, than that it ſhould be ſaid, his ſervant ſlew him by his own order; yet now both will be ſaid of him, to his everlaſting reproach. And it is obſervable, that this very thing which Abimelech was in ſuch care to conceal, appears to have been more particularly remembered by poſte-

ity, than moſt paſſages of this hiſtory; for Joab ſpeaks of it, as that which he expected David would reproach him with, for coming ſo *nigh the wall*, 2 Sam. xi. 21.

The ignominy we ſeek to avoid by ſin, we do but perpetuate the remembrance of.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 6—9. The Iſraelites did not ſo much as admit the God of Iſrael to be one of thoſe many deities they worſhipped, but quite caſt him off: they *forſook the Lord and ſerved not him* at all. Thoſe that think to ſerve both God had mammon, will ſoon come intirely to forſake God, and to ſerve mammon only. If God have not all the heart, he will ſoon have none of it.

Ver. 10—18. It is neceſſary, in true repentance, that there be a full conviction of the utter inſufficiency of all thoſe things to help us and do us any kindneſs, which we have idolized and ſet upon the throne of our hearts, in competition with God. We muſt be convinced that the pleaſures of ſenſe, on which we have doted, cannot be our ſatisfaction; nor the wealth of the world, which we have coveted, be our portion; that we cannot be happy or eaſy any where but in God.

True repentance is not only *for* ſin, but *from* ſin.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1—3. The ſon of a harlot, if born again, born from above, ſhall be accepted of God, and be as welcome as any other to the glorious liberties of his children.

Ver. 12—28. One inſtance of the honour and reſpect we owe to God, as our God, is rightly to poſſeſs that which he gives us to poſſeſs; receive it from him, uſe it for him, keep it for his ſake, and part with it when he calls for it. He has given it us to poſſeſs, not to enjoy. He himſelf only muſt be enjoyed.

Ver. 29—40. From Jephthah's concern on the occaſion of his vow, and his daughter's coming forth to meet him, we muſt learn not to think it ſtrange if the day of our triumphs in this world proves, upon ſome account or other, the day of our griefs; and therefore muſt always rejoice with trembling; we hope for a day of triumph hereafter, which will have no allay.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 8—14. Good men are more ſolicitous and deſirous to know the duty to be done by them, than to know the events that ſhall be concerning them; for duty is ours, events are God's.

God will not fail, ſome way or other, to guide thoſe by his counſel, that are ſincerely deſirous to

know their duty, and apply themſelves to him to teach them, Pſalm xxv. 8, 9.

Let yokefellows excite one another to love and good works; and if the wife will lead, let not the huſband think it any diſparagement to him, to follow her in that which is virtuous and praiſe-worthy.

Ver. 15—23. The reflection of Manoah's wife, upon the appearance of the angel of the Lord to her and her huſband, and the wondrous things he did in their preſence, was much better than that of her huſband. In his there is *great fear:* in her's there is *great faith.* Here the weaker veſſel was the ſtronger believer. Manoah's heart began to fail him, but his wife, as a help-meet for him, encouraged him. Two are better than one, for if one fall into dejections and deſpondencies, the other will help to raiſe him up. Yoke-fellows ſhould piouſly aſſiſt each other's faith and joy, as there is occaſion. None could argue better than Manoah's wife doth here. *We ſhall ſurely die*, ſaith her huſband: nay, ſaith ſhe, we need not fear that; let us never turn that againſt us which is really for us. We ſhall not die unleſs God be pleaſed to kill us; our death muſt come from his hand and his pleaſure; now the tokens of his favour which we have received, forbid us to think that he deſigns our deſtruction.

Let thoſe good Chriſtians, who have had communion with God in the word and prayer, to whom

he has graciouſly manifeſted himſelf, and who have had reaſon to think God has accepted their works, take encouragement from thence in a cloudy and dark day. God would not have done what he has done for my ſoul, if he had deſigned to forſake me, and leave me to periſh at laſt, for his work is perfect; nor will he mock his people with his favours.

Learn to reaſon as Manoah's wife did, if God had deſigned me to periſh under his wrath, he would not have given me ſuch diſtinguiſhing tokens of his favour.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 18—21. *Samſon wiſt not that the Lord was departed from him.* Many have loſt the favourable preſence of God, and are not aware of it. They have provoked God to withdraw from them, but are not ſenſible of their loſs, nor ever complain of it. Their ſouls languiſh, and grow weak, their gifts wither, every thing goes croſs with them, and yet they impute not this to the right cauſe; they are not aware that *God is departed from them*, nor are they in any care to reconcile themſelves to him, or to recover his favour. When God is departed, we cannot do as at other times. The Philiſtines took Samſon when God was departed from him. Thoſe that have thrown themſelves out of God's protection become an eaſy prey to their enemies. If we ſleep in the lap of our luſts, we ſhall certainly wake in the hands of the Philiſtines. Samſon's eyes were

the inlets of his ſin; he ſaw the harlot at Gaza, and went in unto her, and now his puniſhment began there. Now the Philiſtines had blinded him, he had time to remember how his own luſt had blinded him. The beſt preſervative of the eyes, is to turn them away from beholding vanity.

Ver. 22—31. No doubt Samſon greatly repented of his ſin, the diſhonour he had by it done to God, and his forfeiture of the honour God had put upon him, for it appears that God was reconciled to him.

Chriſt was plainly typified by the death of Samſon. He pulled down the devil's kingdom, as Samſon did Dagon's Temple; and when he died, obtained the moſt glorious victory over the powers of darkneſs. Then, when his arms were ſtretched out upon the croſs, as Samſon's to the two pillars, he gave a fatal ſhake to the gates of hell, and *through death, deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil*, Heb. ii. 14, 15. And herein exceeded Samſon, that he not only died with the Philiſtines, but roſe again to triumph over them.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1—6. Outward loſſes drive good people to their prayers, but bad people to their curſes.

Ver. 7—13. They that can make any thing ſerve for a god, no marvel if they make any thing ſerve for a prieſt.

The miniſtry is the beſt calling, but the worſt trade, in the world.

They who pleaſe themſelves with their own deluſions, if providence unexpectedly brings any thing to their hands that furthers them in their evil way, are too apt from thence to infer that God is pleaſed with them.

Carnal hearts are apt to build too much upon their external privileges, and to conclude, that God will certainly do them good, becauſe they are born of godly parents, dwell in praying families, are linked in ſociety with thoſe that are very good, and ſit under a lively miniſtry; whereas all this is but like having a Levite to be their prieſt, which amounts to no ſecurity at all, that God will do them good, unleſs they be good themſelves, and make a good uſe of theſe advantages.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 26—48. Obſerve how the victory was obtained by the Iſraelites over the Benjamites, in the third engagement. Two things they had truſted too much to in the former engagements, the goodneſs of their cauſe, and the ſuperiority of their numbers. It was true that they had both right and ſtrength on their ſide, which were great advantages. But they depended too much upon them, to the neglect of thoſe duties, which now this third time, when they ſee their error, they apply themſelves to. We cannot expect the preſence of God with us, unleſs we ſeek it in the way he has appointed.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1—15. Strong paſſions make work for repentance. What we ſay and do in a heat, our calmer thoughts commonly wiſh undone again.

Every thing that grieves us ſhould bring us to God.

RUTH.

CHAPTER I. VER. 1—5.

I SEE not how Elimelech's removal into the country of Moab, on occaſion of the famine in the land of Canaan could be juſtified. If all ſhould do as he did, Canaan would be diſpeopled.

Note, It is an evidence of a diſcontented, diſtruſtful, unſtable ſpirit, to be ſick of the place in which God hath ſet us, and to be for leaving it preſently, whenever we meet with any uneaſineſs or inconvenience in it. It is folly to think of out-running that croſs, which being laid in our way, we ought to take up. It is our wiſdom to make the beſt of that which is, for it is ſeldom that changing our place is mending it. Elimelech and his two ſons died in the land of Moab. See here,

1. That wherever we go we cannot out-run death, whoſe fatal arrows fly in all places.

2. That we cannot expect to proſper when we go out of the way of our duty. *He that will ſave his life* by any indirect courſes *ſhall loſe it.*

3. That death, when it comes into a family, often makes breach upon breach.

Ver. 6—18. See here, The good affection Naomi bore to the land of Iſrael. Her new alli-

ances in the country of Moab, could not make her forget her relation to the land of Iſrael.

Note, Though there be a reaſon for our being in bad places, yet when the reaſon ceaſeth, we muſt by no means continue in them. Forced abſence from God's ordinances, and forced preſence with wicked people, is a great affliction; but when the force ceaſeth, and it is continued of choice, then it becomes a great ſin.

The land of Moab was now, by the death of her huſband and children, become a melancholy place to Naomi. Thus God takes away from us the comforts we ſtay ourſelves too much upon, and ſolace ourſelves too much in, here in the land of our ſojourning, that we may think more of our home in the other world, and by faith and hope may haſten towards it. Earth is embittered to us, that heaven may be endeared.

When we and our relations are parting, by death or otherwiſe, it is very comfortable, if we have both their teſtimony and the teſtimony of our own conſciences for us, that while we were together, we carefully endeavoured to do our duty in the relation. This will help to allay the bitterneſs of parting; and while we are together, we ſhould labour ſo to carry ourſelves, as that when we part, we may not have cauſe to reflect with regret upon our miſcarriages in the relation.

Ruth's determination to go with Naomi, is a pattern of a reſolute convert to God and religion; thus muſt we be at a point.

1. We must take the Lord for our God. This God is *my God for ever and ever*, I have avouched him for mine.

2. When we take God for our God, we must take his people for our people in all conditions; though they be a poor despised people, yet if they be his, they must be ours.

3. Having *cast in our lot among them*, we must be willing to *take our lot with them*, and to fare as they fare. Submit to the same yoke, and draw in it faithfully; take up the same cross, and carry it chearfully; go where God would have us to go, though it should be into banishment; and lodge where he will have us to lodge, though it be in a prison; die where he will have us die, and lay our bones in the *graves of the upright*, who enter into peace, and rest in their beds, though they be but the *graves of the common people*.

4. We must resolve to continue and persevere, and herein our adherence to Christ must be closer than that of Ruth to Naomi. She resolved that nothing but death should separate them; but we must resolve that death itself shall not separate us from our duty to Christ, and then we may be sure that death itself will not separate us from our happiness in Christ.

Ver. 19—22. Observe, Naomi's compliance of spirit with the change of her state. *Call me not Naomi*, for I am no more *pleasant*, either to myself, or to my friends; *but call* me *Mara*, [that is *bitter*,]

a name more agreeable to my preſent ſtate. If God deal bitterly with her, ſhe accommodates herſelf to the diſpenſation, and is willing to be called *Mara*, bitter.

Note, It well becomes us to have our hearts humbled under humbling providences. When our condition is brought down, our ſpirits ſhould be brought down with it. And then our troubles are ſanctified to us, when we thus comfort with them; for it is not an affliction itſelf, but an affliction rightly borne that doth us good.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1—3. Obſerve, 1. Boaz, though a rich and a great man, had poor relations: every branch of the tree is not a top branch. Let not thoſe that are great in the world, be aſhamed to own their kindred that are mean and deſpiſed, leſt they be found therein, proud, ſcornful, and unnatural.

2. Naomi, though a poor contemptible widow, had rich relations, whom ſhe neither boaſted of, nor was burthenſome to, nor expected any thing from, when ſhe was returned to Bethlehem in diſtreſs.

Thoſe that have rich relations, while they themſelves are poor, ought to know it is the wiſe providence of God that makes the difference, in which we ought to acquieſce; and that to be proud of our relation to ſuch, is a great ſin, and to truſt to it, is a great folly.

Thoſe that are well born, and have been well

brought up, know not what ſtraights they may be reduced to, nor what mean employments they may be obliged to get their bread by, Lam. iv. 5. When the caſe is thus melancholy, let Ruth be remembered, who is a great example,

1. Of humility. When providence had made her poor, ſhe did not ſay, "To glean, which is in effect to beg, I am aſhamed;" but chearfully ſtoops to the meanneſs of her circumſtances, and accommodates herſelf to her lot. High ſpirits can eaſier ſtarve than ſtoop: Ruth was none of thoſe. She doth not tell her mother, ſhe was never brought up to live upon crumbs. Though ſhe was not brought *up* to it, ſhe is brought *down* to it, and is not uneaſy at it.

2. Of induſtry. She was one of thoſe virtuous women that love not to eat the bread of idleneſs. This is an example to young people; let them learn betimes to labour. A diſpoſition to diligence bodes well, both for this world and the other. Love not ſleep, love not ſport, love not ſauntering; but love buſineſs, It is alſo an example to poor people to work for their living, and not beg that which they are able to earn. We muſt not be ſhy of any honeſt employment, though it be mean. Sin is a thing below us: but we muſt not think any thing elſe ſo that providence calls us to.

3. Of regard to her mother. She will not go out without letting her know, and aſking her leave. This reſpect young people ought to ſhew to their

parents and governors: it is part of the honour due to them. She did not ſay, mother, if you will go with me, I will go glean; but do you ſit at home, and take your eaſe, and I will go abroad and take pains. Let young people take advice from the aged, but not *put them upon toil.*

4. Of dependance upon providence; intimated in that, *I will glean after him, in whoſe ſight I ſhall find grace.*

Ver. 4—16. Kind and pious ſalutations were interchanged between Boaz and his reapers. He ſaid to them, the *Lord be with you*; and they replied, *the Lord bleſs thee.* Hereby they expreſſed their mutual reſpect to each other; he to them as good ſervants, and they to him as a good maſter. Things are likely to go on well in a houſe where there is ſuch good will as this between maſter and ſervants. They expreſſed their kindneſs for each other, by praying one for another.

Ver. 17—23. Naomi prayed heartily for him that had been her daughter's benefactor, even before ſhe knew who it was.

Note, The poor muſt pray for thoſe that are kind and liberal to them, and thus requite them, when they are not capable of making them any other requital. Let the *loins of the poor bleſs* thoſe that *refreſh them*, Job xxix. 13.—xxxi. 20. And he that hears the cries of the poor againſt their oppreſſors, Exod. xxii. 27. it may be hoped, will hear the prayers of the poor for their benefactors.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1—8. Fair and open dealings in all matters of contract and commerce, is what thoſe muſt make conſcience of, that would approve themſelves Iſraelites indeed, without guile. How much more honourably and honeſtly doth Boaz come by this purchaſe, than if he had ſecretly undermined his kinſman, and privately clapped up a bargain with Naomi, unknown to him. Honeſty will be found the beſt policy.

Ver. 9—12. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is our *Goel*, our Redeemer, our everlaſting Redeemer. He looked, like Boaz, with compaſſion on the deplorable ſtate of fallen mankind. At a vaſt expence he redeemed the heavenly inheritance for us, which by ſin was mortgaged, and forfeited into the hands of divine juſtice, and which we could never have been able to redeem. He likewiſe purchaſed a peculiar people, whom he would eſpouſe to himſelf, though ſtrangers and foreigners, poor and deſpiſed, like Ruth, that the name of that dead and buried race might not be cut off for ever. He ventured the marring of his own inheritance to do this, for though he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor; but he was abundantly recompenced for it by his Father, who, becauſe he thus humbled himſelf, hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.

Ver. 13—22. We have reaſon to think that Orpah, who returned from Naomi to her people, and her gods, was never half ſo well preferred as Ruth was. He that forſakes all for Chriſt, ſhall find more than all with him: it ſhall be recompenced an hundred fold in this preſent time.

Obſerve, The women ſay of Ruth, that ſhe loved Naomi, and therefore was better to her than ſeven ſons. See how God in his providence ſometimes makes up the want and loſs of thoſe relations, from whom we expected moſt comfort, in thoſe from whom we expected leaſt. The bonds of love prove ſtronger than thoſe of nature. As there is *a friend that ſticks cloſer than a brother*; ſo here there was a daughter-in-law, better than an own child. See what wiſdom and grace will do.

I SAMUEL.

CHAPTER I. VER. 1—8.

IT is an evidence of a baſe and ill diſpoſition, to delight in grieving thoſe that are melancholy, and of a ſorrowful ſpirit; and in putting thoſe out of humour that are apt to fret and be uneaſy. We ought to bear one another's burdens, not add to them. Our ſorrow upon any account is then ſinful and inordinate, when it diverts us from our duty to God, and embitters our comfort in him, when it makes us unthankful for the mercies we enjoy, and diſtruſtful of the goodneſs of God to us in further mercies; when it caſts a damp upon our joy in Chriſt, and hinders us from doing the duty, and taking the comfort of our particular relations.

We ought to take notice of our comforts to keep us from over-grieving for our croſſes; for our croſſes we deſerve, but our comforts we have forfeited.

Ver. 9—18. It is as great a piece of ſelf-denial to control our paſſions, as it is to control our appetites.

It ill becomes us to be raſh and haſty in our cenſures of others, and to be forward to believe people guilty of ill things, while either the matter of fact, on which the cenſure is grounded, is doubtful and unproved, or capable of a good conſtruction.

It is no new thing for thoſe that do well to be ill thought of, and we muſt not think ſtrange if at any time it be our lot.

When we are at any time unjuſtly cenſured, we have need to ſet a double watch before the door of our lips, that we do not recriminate and return cenſure for cenſure

When we are unjuſtly cenſured, we ſhould endeavour not only to clear ourſelves, but to ſatisfy our brethren, by giving them a juſt and true account of that which they miſapprehended.

By our meek and humble carriage towards thoſe that reproach us, becauſe they do not know us, we may perhaps make them our friends, and turn their cenſures into prayers.

Ver. 19—28. Though God ſeem long to forget his people's burdens, troubles, cares and prayers, yet he will at length make it appear that they are not out of his mind.

Mercies, in anſwer to prayer, are to be remembered with peculiar expreſſions of thankfulneſs, Pſalm cxvi. 1, 2.

Thoſe that are detained from public ordinances by the nurſing and tending of little children, may take comfort from this inſtance of Hannah's not going up to the yearly ſacrifice until Samuel was weaned, and believe that if they act with an eye to God, he will graciouſly accept them therein, and though they tarry at home they ſhall divide the ſpoil.

Little children ſhould learn betimes to worſhip God. Their parents ſhould inſtruct them, and bring

them to it, put them upon doing it as well as they can, and God will graciouſly accept them and teach them to do better.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1—10. What we win by prayer, we may wear with comfort, and muſt wear with praiſe.

To ſome God gives power to get wealth; from others he takes away power to keep the wealth they have.

Ver. 11—26. *The ſons of Eli were ſons of Belial.* Parents cannot give grace to their children nor doth it run in the blood. Many that are ſincerely pious themſelves, live to ſee their offspring notoriouſly impious and profane.

Nothing brings a greater reproach upon religion, than miniſters' covetouſneſs, ſenſuality and imperiouſneſs.

Ver. 27—36. Eli reproved his ſons too gently, and did not threaten them as he ſhould; and therefore God ſent a prophet to reprove him ſharply, and to threaten him; becauſe by his indulgence he had ſtrengthened their hands in their wickedneſs.

If good men be wanting in their duty, and by their careleſſneſs and remiſſneſs contribute any thing to the ſin of ſinners, they muſt expect both to hear of it, and to ſmart for it.

Thoſe that allow and countenance their children in any evil way, and do not uſe their authority to reſtrain and puniſh them, do in effect *honour them*

more than God; being more tender of their reputation than of his glory, and more desirous to humour them than to honour him.

Want is the just punishment of wantonness. Those who could not be content without dainties and varieties, are brought, they or theirs, to want necessaries, and the Lord is righteous in it.

The wickedness of ministers, though it destroy themselves, yet it shall not destroy the ministry. How bad soever the officers are, the office shall continue always to the end of the world. If some falsify their trust, yet others shall be raised up that will be true to it. God's work shall never fall to the ground for want of hands to carry it on.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1—10. *Eli was laid down in his place.* Probably he kept his chamber much, which gave his sons the greater liberty. And he affected retirement the more, because his eyes began to wax dim, an affliction which came justly upon him for winking at his sons' faults.

When Eli's own sons were a grief to him, his little servitor Samuel was his joy. Let those that are afflicted in their children, thank God if they have any about them in whom they are comforted.

The call which divine grace designs to make effectual, shall be repeated till it is so, that is, till we come at the call; for the purpose of God, according to which we are called, shall certainly stand.

Even the infirmities and miſtakes of thoſe whom God employs, are over-ruled by infinite wiſdom, and made ſerviceable to his purpoſes.

Then we may expect that God will ſpeak to us, when we ſet ourſelves to hearken to what he ſaith, Pſalm lxxxv. 8. Hab. ii. 1. When we come to read the word of God, and to attend on the preaching of it, we ſhould come thus diſpoſed, ſubmitting our ſouls to the commanding light and power of it: *Speak Lord for thy ſervant heareth.*

Ver. 11—18. Sinners do by their own wickedneſs make themſelves vile. Eli's ſons made light of God; and made his offerings vile in the people's eyes, but the ſhame returned into their own boſom, they *made themſelves vile.*

Thoſe that do not reſtrain the ſins of others, when it is in the power of their hand to do it, make themſelves partakers of the guilt, and will be charged as acceſſaries.

Thoſe whom God manifeſts himſelf to, he makes and keeps low in their own eyes, and willing to ſtoop to any thing by which they may he ſerviceable to his glory, though but as door-keepers in his houſe.

A good man deſires to be acquainted with all the will of God, whether it make for him or againſt him.

Eli piouſly acquieſced in the divine puniſhment denounced againſt his family. He did not complain of it, as Cain did, that it was greater than either he

deſerved, or could bear; but patiently ſubmitted and accepted the puniſhment of his iniquity: *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.* Thus we ought to quiet ourſelves under God's rebukes, and never to *ſtrive with our Maker.*

Ver. 19—21. When old Eli was rejected, young Samuel was eſtabliſhed. For God will never leave himſelf without witneſs, nor his church without a guide.

CHAP. IV.

Ver 1—9. It is common for thoſe that have eſtranged themſelves from the vitals of religion, to diſcover a great fondneſs for the rituals, and external obſervances of it; very common for thoſe that even *deny the power of godlineſs*, not only to have, but to have in admiration the form of it. *The temple of the Lord* is cried up, and the ark of the Lord ſtickled for, with a great deal of ſeeming zeal by multitudes, that have no regard for the Lord of the temple, and the God of the ark; as if a fiery concern for the name of Chriſtianity, would atone for a profane contempt of the thing.

If there had been nothing elſe to invalidate the expectations of the Iſraelites from the ark, how could they expect it ſhould bring a bleſſing, when Hophni and Phineas were the men that brought it. It would have given too much countenance to their villainy, if the ark had done any kindneſs to Iſrael, while it was in the hands of thoſe graceleſs prieſts.

Carnal people triumph much in the external privileges and performances of religion, and build much upon them, as if thoſe would infallibly ſave them; and as if the ark, God's throne, in the camp, would bring them to heaven, though the world and the fleſh be upon the throne in the heart.

Ver. 10, 11. Now the Iſraelites are convinced, that God will not be preſcribed to by vain and fooliſh men, and that though he has bound us to his ark, he has not bound himſelf to it; but will rather deliver it into the hands of his ſworn enemies, than ſuffer it to be profaned by his falſe friends, and countenance their ſuperſtition. Let none think to ſhelter themſelves from the wrath of God, under the cloke of a viſible profeſſion, for there will be ſome caſt into utter darkneſs, that have *eaten and drank in Chriſt's preſence.*

Ver. 12—18. All good men lay the intereſts of God's church nearer their hearts, than any ſecular intereſt of their own; and cannot but be in pain and fear for them, if at any time they are in peril. How can we be eaſy if the ark be not ſafe?

Eli's heart was broke firſt, and then his neck. So fell the high-prieſt and judge of Iſrael. Thus did his ſun ſet under a cloud; thus was the folly and wickedneſs of thoſe ſons of his, whom he had indulged, his ruin at laſt. Thus doth God ſometimes ſet marks of his diſpleaſure upon good men in this life, who have carried themſelves amiſs, that others may hear and fear, and take warning.

A man may die miſerably, and yet not die eternally; may come to an untimely end, and yet the end be peace.

Ver. 19—22. Note 1. The purity and plenty of God's ordinances, and the tokens of his preſence in them, are the glory of any people; much more ſo than their wealth, and trade, and intereſt among the nations.

2. Nothing is more cutting, more killing to a faithful Iſraelite, than the want and loſs of theſe. If God go, the glory goes, and all good goes. Wo unto us if he depart!

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1—5. God having puniſhed Iſrael that betrayed the ark, by giving it into the hands of the Philiſtines, he will next deal with thoſe that abuſed it, and will fetch it out of their hands again. Thus even the *wrath of man ſhall praiſe him*; and he is bringing about his own glory, even when he ſeems to neglect it, Pſalm lxxvi. 10. *Out of the eater ſhall come forth meat.*

The kingdom of Satan will certainly fall before the kingdom of Chriſt, error before truth, profaneneſs before godlineſs, and corruption before grace, in the hearts of the faithful. When the intereſts of religion ſeem to be run down, and ready to ſink, yet even then we may be confident, that the day of their triumph will come. Great is the truth,

and will prevail. Dagon, by falling proſtrate before the ark of God, which was a poſture of adoration, did as it were direct his worſhippers to pay their homage to the God of Iſrael, as greater than all gods. See Exod. xviii. 11.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 10—18. The ark that was carried into the land of the Philiſtines, a trophy of their victory, carried back with it trophies of its own, and laſting monuments of the diſgrace of the Philiſtines. Note, God will be no loſer in his glory at laſt, by the ſucceſſes of the church's enemies againſt his ark, but will get him honour from thoſe that ſeek to diſhonour him.

The two milch-kine conducting the ark to Bethſhemeſh, was a wonderful inſtance of the power of God over the brute creatures, and, all things conſidered, no leſs than a miracle. That cattle unaccuſtomed to the yoke ſhould draw ſo even, ſo orderly, and ſtill go forward; that, without any driver, they ſhould go from home, to which all tame creatures have a natural inclination, and from their own calves, to which they had a natural affection; that without any director, they went the ſtraight road to Bethſhemeſh, a city eight or ten miles off, never miſſed the way, never turned aſide into the fields to feed themſelves, nor turned back home to feed their calves; they went on lowing for their young ones, by which it appeared that they had not forgot them, but that nature was ſenſible of the

grievance of going from them; the power of the God of Nature therefore appeared ſo much the greater, in over-ruling one of the ſtrongeſt inſtincts of nature.

The men of Bethſhemeſh were reaping their wheat-harveſt, when theſe kine conducted the ark into their borders. They were going on with their worldly buſineſs, and were in no care about the ark, made no enquiries what was become of it; if they had, it is likely they might have had private intelligence beforehand of its coming, and might have gone to meet it, and conduct it into their own border. But they were as careleſs as the people that *ceiled their own houſes, and let God's houſe lie waſte.*

Note, God will, in his own time, effect the deliverance of his church, not only though it be fought againſt by its enemies, but though it be neglected by its friends.

When the reapers *ſaw the ark they rejoiced.* Though they had not zeal and courage enough to attempt the reſcue or ranſom of it, yet, when it did come, they bid it heartily welcome. Note, The return of the ark, and the revival of holy ordinances after days of reſtraint and trouble, cannot but be matter of great joy to every faithful Iſraelite.

Ver. 19—21. The men of Bethſhemeſh ſinned in *looking into the ark of the Lord.* Note, It is a great affront to God for vain men to pry into, and meddle with, the ſecret things which belong not to them. Deut. xxix. 29. Col. ii. 18. We were all ruined by an ambition of forbidden knowledge.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1, 2. The men of Kirjath-jearim chearfully *fetched up the ark of the Lord* to them, when the men of Bethſhemeſh were anxious to get rid of it. Note, The judgments of God on thoſe who profane his ordinances, ſhould not make us afraid of the ordinances, but of profaning them, and making an ill uſe of them.

The men of Bethſhemeſh left the ark expoſed upon a ſtone in the open field, and, though it was a city of prieſts, none of them received it into his houſe, but the men of Kirjath-jearim, though common Iſraelites, gave it houſe-room, and, no doubt, the beſt furniſhed room in the houſe to which it was brought.

Note, 1. God will find out a reſting place for his ark; if ſome thruſt it from them, yet the hearts of others ſhall be inclined to receive it.

2. It is no new thing for God's ark to be thruſt into a private houſe. Chriſt and his apoſtles preached from houſe to houſe, when they could not have public places at command.

3. Sometimes prieſts are ſhamed and out-done in religion by common Iſraelites.

After twenty years were paſſed, the houſe of Iſrael at length became ſenſible of the want of the ark.

Note, 1. Thoſe that know how to value God's ordinances, cannot but reckon it a very lamentable thing to want them.

2. True repentance and converſion begins in lamenting after the Lord. We muſt be ſenſible that by ſin we have provoked him to withdraw, and are undone if we continue in a ſtate of diſtance from him, and be reſtleſs till we have recovered his favour, and obtained his gracious returns. It was better with the Iſraelites, when they wanted the ark, and were lamenting after it, than when they had the ark, and were prying into it, or priding themſelves in it. Better ſee people longing in the ſcarcity of the means of grace, than lothing in the abundance of them.

Ver. 7—12. Samuel erected a thankful memorial of this victory obtained by Iſrael over the Philiſtines, to the glory of God, and for the encouragement of Iſrael. He ſet up an Eben-ezer, the ſtone of help. If ever the peoples' hard hearts ſhould loſe the impreſſions of this providence, this ſtone would either revive that remembrance, and make them thankful, or remain a ſtanding witneſs againſt them for their unthankfulneſs.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 3—10. Children ſhould take care that they do nothing to grieve or frighten their parents, but be tender of their tenderneſs.

Wherever we are, we ſhould improve our opportunities of acquainting ourſelves with thoſe that are wiſe and good. But there are many that will

conſult a man of God, if he comes in their way, that would not go a ſtep out of their way to get wiſdom.

Men of God are honourable men and ſhould be ſo in our eyes. Acquaintance with the things of God, and ſerviceableneſs to the kingdom of God, puts true honour upon men, and makes them great.

Moſt people would rather be told their fortune than told their duty; how to be rich than how to be ſaved. If it were the buſineſs of the men of God to direct for the recovery of loſt aſſes, they would be conſulted much more than they are now it is their buſineſs to direct for the recovery of loſt ſouls; ſo prepoſterous is the care of moſt men!

Thoſe that are prophets muſt firſt be ſeers: they who undertake to ſpeak to others of the things of God, muſt have an inſight into thoſe things themſelves.

Ver. 18—27. Civil reſpects muſt be paid to thoſe, who, in civil things have the precedency given them by the divine providence.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1—8. The firſt place Samuel directs Saul to, after he had anointed him king over Iſrael, was a ſepulchre, the ſepulchre of one of his anceſtors; for Rachel died in travail with Benjamin, of whoſe tribe Saul was. There he muſt read a lecture of his own mortality; and now he had a crown in his

eye muſt think of his grave, in which all his honour would be laid in the duſt.

Ver. 9—16. It became a proverb, commonly uſed in Iſrael, when they would expreſs their wonder at a bad man's either becoming good, or at leaſt being found in good company, *Is Saul among the prophets?*

Note, Saul among the prophets is a wonder to a proverb. Let not the worſt be deſpaired of; yet let not an external ſhew of devotion, and a ſudden change for the preſent, be too much relied on; for Saul among the prophets, was Saul ſtill.

Ver. 17—26. None will be loſers at laſt by their humility and modeſty. Honour, like the ſhadow, follows thoſe that flee from it, but flees from thoſe that purſue it.

Whatever good there is in us, or is done by us, at any time, it muſt be aſcribed to the grace of God. If the heart bend at any time the right way, it is becauſe he has touched it. One touch is enough, when it is divine.

Men are differently affected to our exalted Redeemer. God hath ſet him king upon the holy hill of Sion. There is a remnant that ſubmit to him, rejoice in him, bring him preſents, and follow him wherever he goes; and they are ſuch *whoſe hearts God has touched*, whom he has made willing in the day of his power. But there are others who deſpiſe him, who aſk, *How ſhall this man ſave us?* They

are offended in him, ſtumble at his external meanneſs, and they will be broken by it.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1—5. There is a juſt debt which every man owes to his own good name, eſpecially men in public ſtations, which is to guard it againſt unjuſt aſperſions and ſuſpicions, that we may finiſh our courſe with honour, as well as joy.

The teſtimony of our neighbours, and eſpecially the teſtimony of our own conſciences, that we have in our places lived honeſtly, will be our comfort, under the ſlights and contempts that are put upon us.

Demetrius is a happy man, that has *a good report of all men, and of the truth itſelf*, 3 John 12.

Ver. 16—25. Though we meet with proſperity and ſucceſs in a way of ſin, yet we muſt not therefore think the more favourably of it.

We muſt never think well of that which God in his law frowns upon, though in his providence he ſeem to ſmile upon it.

It is a ſin againſt God not to pray for the Iſrael of God, eſpecially for thoſe of them that are under our charge: and good men are afraid of the guilt of omiſſions.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1—7. Nothing makes the name of Iſrael odious to them that are without, ſo much as the fraud and diſhoneſty of thoſe that are called by that worthy name.

If profeſſors of religion cheat and over-reach, break their word and betray their truſt, religion ſuffers by it, and is *had in abomination with the Philiſtines*. Who may one truſt, if not an Iſraelite, one that, it is expected, ſhould be *without guile?*

Ver. 8—14. It is not ſinning that ruins men, but ſinning and not repenting.

Thoſe that diſobey the commandments of God do fooliſhly for themſelves. Sin is folly and ſinners are the greateſt fools.

But was it not hard to paſs ſo ſevere a ſentence upon Saul and his houſe for a ſingle error, and that ſeemingly ſo ſmall, and in excuſe of which he had ſo much to ſay, *Now thy kingdom ſhall not continue!* No: *The Lord is righteous in all his ways*, and doth no man any wrong; *he will be juſtified when he ſpeaks, and clear when he judgeth.* By this,

1. He ſhews that there is no ſin little, becauſe no little god to ſin againſt; but that every ſin is a forfeiture of the heavenly kingdom, for which we ſtood fair.

2. He ſhews, that diſobedience to an expreſs command, though in a ſmall matter, is a great provocation; as in the caſe of our firſt parents.

3. He warns us to *take heed of our ſpirits*, for that which to men may ſeem but a ſmall offence, yet to him that knows from what principle, and with what diſpoſition of mind it is done, may appear a heinous crime.

4. God, in rejecting Saul, for an error ſeemingly little, as by a foil, ſets off the luſtre of his mercy, in forgiving ſuch great ſins as thoſe of David, Manaſſeh, and others.

5. We are taught hereby, how neceſſary it is that we *wait on our God continually*.

Saul loſt his kingdom for want of two or three hours patience.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1—15. It is an inviſible power that ſets bounds to the malice of the church's enemies, and ſuffers them not to do that which we would think there is nothing to hinder them from.

It is common for thoſe that have loſt the ſubſtance of religion, to be moſt fond of the ſhadows of it, as here is a deſerted prince courting a deſerted prieſt.

God will, ſome way or other, direct the ſteps of thoſe that *acknowledge him in all their ways*, and ſeek unto him for direction, with full purpoſe of heart to follow his conduct. Sometimes we find moſt comfort in that which is leaſt our own doing, and into which we have been led by the unexpected, but well obſerved, turns of providence.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 6—13. The beſt evidence of our being predeſtinated to the kingdom of glory, is our being ſealed with the ſpirit of promiſe, and our experience of a work of grace in our own hearts.

Ver. 14—23. Thoſe whom God deſigns for any ſervice, his providence ſhall concur with his grace to prepare and qualify them for it.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1—11. The evil ſpirit for the preſent had left Saul. David's harp having given him ſome relief, perhaps the alarms and affairs of the war prevented the return of the diſtemper. Buſineſs is a good antidote againſt melancholy. Let the mind have ſomething without to faſten on, and employ itſelf about, and it will be the leſs in danger of preying upon itſelf.

Ver. 12—30. David would not be driven off from his thoughts of engaging the Philiſtine, by the ill-will of his brother. Thoſe that undertake great and public ſervices, muſt not think it ſtrange if they be diſcountenanced and oppoſed by thoſe, from whom they had reaſon to expect ſupport and aſſiſtance; but muſt humbly go on with their work, in the face, not only of the enemies' threats, but of their friends' ſlights and ſuſpicions.

Ver. 31—39. Our experiences ought to be improved by us, as our encouragements to truſt in God and venture in the way of duty. He that has delivered, doth and will deliver.

Ver. 48—58. David's victory over Goliath was typical of the triumphs of the ſon of David over Satan and all the powers of darkneſs, whom he *ſpoiled, and made a ſhew of them openly*, Col. ii. 15. and we through him are *more than conquerors*.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1—5. None had ſo much reaſon to diſaffect David as Jonathan had, becauſe he was to put him by from the crown, yet none affects him more. Thoſe that are governed in their love by principles of wiſdom and grace, will not ſuffer their affections to be alienated by any ſecular regards or conſiderations: the greater thoughts will ſwallow up and over-rule the leſs.

True love deſires to be conſtant. Thoſe who love Chriſt as their own ſouls, will be willing to join themſelves to him in an everlaſting covenant.

Ver. 6—11. Compare David, with his harp in his hand, aiming to ſerve Saul, and Saul, with his javelin in his hand, aiming to ſlay David; and obſerve the ſweetneſs and uſefulneſs of God's perſecuted people, and the brutiſhneſs and barbarity of their perſecutors. *The blood-thirſty hate the upright, but the juſt ſeek his ſoul*, Prov. xxix. 10.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1—9. Here David did not carry it like himſelf. He told Ahimelech a groſs untruth. Let us all take occaſion from this, to lament,

1. The weakneſs and infirmity of good men. The beſt are not perfect on this ſide heaven. It is poſſible there may be true grace, where yet there are many failings.

2. The wickedneſs of bad times, which forceth good men into ſuch ſtraights as prove temptations too ſtrong for them. Oppreſſion makes a wiſe man do fooliſhly.

Two things we may obſerve concerning this ſword of Goliah, which David now obtained from Ahimelech.

1. That God had graciouſly given it him, as a pledge of his ſingular favour; ſo that, whenever he drew it, nay, whenever he looked upon it, it would be a great ſupport to his faith, by bringing to mind that great inſtance of the particular care and countenance of the divine providence he was then under. Experiences are great encouragements.

2. That he had gratefully given it back to God, dedicating it to him, and to his honour, as a token of his thankfulneſs; and now in his diſtreſs it ſtood him in mighty ſtead.

Note, What we devote to God's praiſe, and

ſerve him with, is moſt likely to redound, one way or other, to our own comfort and benefit. What we gave we have.

Ver. 10—15. David, though king elect, is here an exile: deſigned to be maſter of vaſt treaſures, yet had been juſt now begging his bread: anointed to the crown, and yet here forced to run his country. Thus do God's providences ſometimes ſeem to run counter to his promiſes, for the trial of his people's faith, and the glorifying of his name, in the accompliſhment of his counſels, notwithſtanding the difficulties that lay in the way.

Iſrael's darling is neceſſitated to quit the land of Iſrael, and he that was the Philiſtines' great enemy, goes to ſeek for ſhelter among them. God's perſecuted people have often found better uſage from Philiſtines than from Iſraelites, in the Gentile theatres, than in the Jewiſh ſynagogues. The king of Judah impriſoned Jeremiah, and the king of Babylon ſet him at liberty.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1—5. The ſon of David is ready to receive diſtreſſed ſouls, that will appoint him their captain, and be commanded by him.

Ver. 6—19. Saul ordered Doeg to be the executioner of the prieſts of the Lord, and he did it. Barbarous cruelty, and ſuch as one cannot think of without horror! Strange that ever it ſhould enter

into the heart of man to be ſo impious, ſo inhuman! We may ſee in this,

The deſperate wickedneſs of Saul when the Spirit of the Lord was parted from him. Nothing ſo vile, but they may be hurried to it who have provoked God to give them up to their hearts' luſts. He that was ſo compaſſionate as to ſpare Agag and the cattle of the Amalekites, in diſobedience to the command of God, could now, with unrelenting bowels, ſee the prieſts of the Lord murdered, and nothing ſpared of all that belonged to them.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 19—29. When the Philiſtines invaded the land, they were far from intending any kindneſs to David by it, yet the over-ruling providence of God which orders all events, and the times of them, made it very ſerviceable to him. The wiſdom of God is never at a loſs for ways and means to preſerve his people. As this Saul here was diverted, ſo another Saul was converted, juſt then when he was *breathing out threatnings and ſlaughter againſt the ſaints of the Lord*, Acts ix. 1.

David *cut off the ſkirt of Saul's robe*, but ſoon repented that he had done that.

Note, It is a good thing to have a heart within us, ſmiting us for ſins that ſeem little: it is a ſign conſcience is awake and tender, and will be a mean to prevent greater ſins.

Sin is a thing which it becomes us to ſtartle at, and to reſiſt the temptations to, not only with reſolution, but with a holy indignation.

David not only would not kill Saul himſelf, but he would not ſuffer thoſe about him to do it. Thus did he render good for evil to him from whom he had received evil for good; and was herein both a type of Chriſt, who ſaved his perſecutors, and an example to all Chriſtians, not to be *overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good.*

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1. Note, 1. Thoſe have hard hearts that can bury their faithful miniſters with dry eyes; that are not ſenſible of the loſs of thoſe that have prayed for them, and taught them the way of the Lord.

2. When God's providence removes our relations and friends from us, we ought to be humbled for our miſcarriages towards them, while they were with us.

Ver. 2—11. Riches are common bleſſings, which God often gives to Nabals, to whom he gives neither wiſdom nor grace.

Wiſdom is good with an inheritance, but an inheritance is good for little without wiſdom.

What little reaſon have we to value the wealth of this world, when ſo great a ſot as Nabal abounds, and ſo great a ſaint as David ſuffers want!

Ver. 18—31. We have here an account of Abigail's prudent management for the preſerving her huſband and family from the deſtruction that was juſt coming upon them: and we find, that ſhe acted her part admirably well, and fully anſwered her character. The paſſion of fools often make thoſe breaches in a little time, which the wiſe, with all their wiſdom, have much ado to make up again.

When we are tempted to ſin, we ſhould conſider how it will appear in the reflection. Let us never do any thing for which our conſciences will afterwards have occaſion to upbraid us, and which we ſhall look back upon with regret.

Ver. 32—35. David gives God thanks for ſending him this happy check, in his ſinful way, by means of Abigail.

Note, 1. God is to be acknowledged in all the kindneſſes that our friends do us, either for ſoul or body. Whoever meets us with counſel, direction, comfort, caution, or ſeaſonable reproof, we muſt ſee God ſending them.

2. We ought to be very thankful for thoſe happy providences which are means of preventing ſin.

David diſmiſſed Abigail with an anſwer of peace. He doth, in effect, own himſelf overcome by her eloquence.

Note, 1. Wiſe and good men will hear reaſon, and let that rule them, though it come from thoſe that are every way their inferiors, and though their paſſions are up, and their ſpirits provoked.

2. Oaths cannot bind us to that which is ſinful. David had ſolemnly vowed the death of Nabal: he did ill to make ſuch a vow, but he had done worſe if he had performed it.

3. A wiſe and faithful reproof is often better taken, and ſpeeds better than we expected: ſuch is the hold God has of men's conſciences. See Prov. xxviii. 23.

Ver. 36—44. Obſerve, How ſottiſh Nabal was in the indulgence of his own brutiſh appetite. *He was very drunk.* A ſign he was nabal, *a fool*, that could not uſe his plenty, but he muſt abuſe it: could not be pleaſant with his friends, but he muſt make a beaſt of himſelf. There is not a ſurer ſign that a man has but little wiſdom, nor a ſurer way to ruin the little he has, than drinking to exceſs.

Next morning, when he was come to himſelf a little, and his wife had told him how near to deſtruction he had brought himſelf and his family, by his own rudeneſs, and with what difficulty ſhe had interpoſed to prevent it, how is Nabal changed! His heart over-night merry with wine, next morning heavy as a ſtone: ſo deceitful are carnal pleaſures; ſo tranſient the laughter of the fool; *the end of that mirth is heavineſs.* Drunkards are ſometimes ſad, when they reflect upon their own folly. Joy in God makes the heart always light.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1—7. Unbelief is a ſin that eaſily beſets even good men. When *without are fightings, within are fears*, and it is a hard matter to get over them. Long trials are in danger of tiring the faith and patience even of very good men.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 1—6. Troubles are terrors to the children of diſobedience. Many ſeem enemies to ſin in others, while they indulge it in themſelves. Saul will drive the Devil out of his kingdom, and yet harbour him in his heart, by envy and malice.

Ver. 7—14. It is common for men to inveigh ſeverely againſt thoſe ſins which they are in no temptation to, yet afterwards themſelves to be overcome by them. Had one told Saul, when he was deſtroying the witches, that he himſelf would e'er long conſult with one, he would have ſaid as Hazael did, *What? is thy ſervant a dog?*

But who knows what miſchiefs they will run into that forſake God, and are forſaken of him?

Ver. 20—25. When God in his word ſpeaks terror to ſinners, at the ſame time he opens to them a door of hope, if they repent: but they that apply themſelves to the gates of hell for ſuccour, muſt there expect darkneſs without any glimpſe of light.

CHAP. XXX.

Ver. 1—6. Thoſe that have taken the Lord for their God, may take encouragement from their relation to him in the worſt of times.

It is the duty and intereſt of all good people, whatever happens, to encourage themſelves in God as their Lord and their God; aſſuring themſelves that he can and will bring light out of darkneſs, peace out of trouble, and good out of evil, to all that love him, and are *the called according to his purpoſe*, Pſalm xxvii. 13, 14. It was David's practice, and he had the comfort of it; *What time I am afraid I will truſt in thee.* When he was at his wit's end, he was not at his faith's end.

Ver. 7—20. It is well if we get this good by our afflictions, to be minded by them of neglected duties, and particularly to be quickned by them to enquire of the Lord. See 1 Chron. xv. 13.

When we are diſappointed and diſcouraged in our expectations from ſecond cauſes, then to go on with chearfulneſs, confiding in the divine power, this is giving glory to God, by believing againſt hope in hope.

It was prudently done to relieve the Egyptian, whom David and his men found ſick in the field, for though deſpicable, he was capable of doing them ſervice; ſo it proved, though they were not certain of it when they relieved him. It is a good reaſon why

we ſhould neither do any injury, nor deny a kindneſs to any man, becauſe we know not but ſome time or other it may be in his power to return either a kindneſs or an injury.

CHAP. XXXI.

Ver. 1—7. The day of recompence is now come, in which Saul muſt account for the blood of the Amalekites, which he had ſinfully ſpared, that of the prieſts, which he had more ſinfully ſpilt, and that of David which he would have ſpilt, muſt come into the account. Now his day is come to fall, as David foreſaw, when he ſhould deſcend into battle, and periſh, chap. xxvi. 10. Come and ſee the *righteous judgments of God.*

Ver. 8—13. This book began with the birth of Samuel, but now it ends with the burial of Saul, the comparing of which two together, will teach us to prefer the honour that comes from God, before any of the honours which this world pretends to have the diſpoſal of.

II SAMUEL.

CHAPTER I. VER. 17—27.

DAVID had reaſon to ſay, that Jonathan's love to him was wonderful. Sure never was the like, for a man to love one who he knew was to take the crown over his head, and be ſo faithful to his rival. See here,

1. That nothing is more delightful in this world than a true friend, wiſe and good, that kindly receives and returns our affection, and is faithful to us in all our true intereſts.

2. That nothing is more diſtreſsful than the loſs of ſuch a friend, it is a parting with a piece of one's ſelf. It is the vanity of this world, that what is moſt pleaſant to us, we are moſt liable to be diſtreſſed in. The more we love, the more we grieve.

Good men are touched in a very ſenſible part by the reproaches of them that reproach God.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1—7. We muſt apply ourſelves to God, not only when we are in diſtreſs, but even then when the word ſmiles upon us, and ſecond cauſes begin to work in favour of us.

Ver. 8—17. Divine providence ſerves its own purpoſes, by the ſtupidity of men at ſome times, and the activity of the ſame perſons at other times; they are unlike themſelves, and yet the motions of providence are uniform.

Ver. 18—24. Obſerve how fatal Aſahel's wilfulneſs was to him. See here,

1. How death often comes upon us by ways that we leaſt ſuſpect. Who would fear the hand of a flying enemy, or the butt end of a ſpear? yet from theſe Aſahel receives his death wound.

2. How oft are we betrayed by the accompliſhments we are proud of! Aſahel's ſwiftneſs, which he preſumed ſo much upon, did him no kindneſs, but forwarded his fate, and with it he run upon his death, inſtead of running from it.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1—6. The conteſt between grace and corruption in the hearts of believers, who are ſanctified but in part, may fitly be compared to this conteſt between the houſe of David and the houſe of Saul. There is a long war between them, the fleſh luſting againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh; but as the work of ſanctification is carried on, corruption, like the houſe of Saul, grows weaker and weaker; while grace, like the houſe of David, grows ſtronger and ſtronger, till it comes to a perfect man, and judgment is brought forth unto victory.

Ver. 7—21. Proud men will not bear to be reproved, eſpecially by thoſe whom they think they have obliged.

God can find out ways to make thoſe ſerviceable to the kingdom of Chriſt, who yet have no ſincere affection for it, and who have vigorouſly ſet themſelves againſt it. Enemies are ſometimes made a foot-ſtool, not only to be trodden upon, but to aſcend by. *The earth helped the woman.*

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1—8. Mephiboſheth, Jonathan's ſon, was lame. See what ill accidents children are liable to in their infancy, the effect of which may ſtick by them to their great uneaſineſs all their days. Even the children of princes and great men, the children of good men, for ſuch a one Jonathan was, children that are well tended, and have nurſes of their own to take care of them, yet are not always ſafe. What reaſon have we to be thankful to God for the preſervation of our limbs and ſenſes to us, through the many perils of the weak and helpleſs ſtate of infancy, and to own his goodneſs in giving *his angels charge concerning* us, *to bear* us *up in their arms*, out of which there is no danger of falling, Pſalm xci. 12.

Ver. 9—12. David called Iſhboſheth a righteous perſon.

Note, Charity teaches us to make the beſt, not only of our friends, but of our enemies, and to think

thoſe may be righteous perſons, who yet in ſome inſtances do us wrong. I muſt not preſently judge a man an ill man, becauſe I think him ſo to me. David owns Iſhboſheth an honeſt man, though he had created him a deal of trouble unjuſtly.

Rechab and Baanah, the murderers of Iſhboſheth inſtead of receiving the reward they expected from David, were put to death by his orders. What a horrid diſappointment! And ſuch they will meet with who think to ſerve the intereſts of the Son of David, by any immoral practices, by war and perſecution, fraud and rapine; that under colour of religion murder princes, break ſolemn contracts, lay countries waſte, *hate their brethren and caſt them out, and ſay, Let the Lord be glorified*; kill them, *and think they do God good ſervice.*

However men may canonize ſuch methods of ſerving the church and the catholic cauſe, Chriſt will let them know another day, that Chriſtianity was not intended to deſtroy humanity; and they who thus think to merit heaven, ſhall not eſcape the damnation of hell.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 6—11. Uzzah was ſtruck dead for touching the ark. The touching of the ark was expreſsly forbidden to the Levites, of whom Uzzah was one, under pain of death. See Numb. iv. 15. God would hereby teach us that a good intention will

not juſtify a bad action: it will not ſuffice to ſay of that which is ill done, that it was well meant.

The Lord bleſſed Obededom and all his houſhold becauſe of the ark. The ſame hand that puniſhed Uzzah's proud preſumption, rewarded Obededom's humble boldneſs, and made the ark to him a *ſavour of life unto life*,

Let maſters of families be encouraged to keep up religion in their families, and to ſerve God, and the intereſts of his kingdom, with their houſes and eſtates, for that is the way to bring a bleſſing upon all they have. The ark is a gueſt which none ſhall loſe by, that bid it welcome. Piety is the beſt friend to proſperity. In wiſdom's left hand are riches and honour. His houſhold ſhared in the bleſſing: it is good living in a family that entertains the ark, for all about it will fare the better for it.

Ver. 12—19. When David heard that Obededom had ſuch joy of the ark, then he would have it to his own city. Note, The experience others have had of the gains of godlineſs, ſhould encourage us to be religious. Is the ark a bleſſing to others houſes, let us bid it welcome to ours.

Ver. 20—23. Miniſters muſt not think that their public performances will excuſe them from their family worſhip; but when they have with their inſtructions and prayers bleſſed the ſolemn aſſemblies, they muſt return in the ſame manner to bleſs the houſholds, for with them they are in a parti-

cular manner charged. David, though he had prophets and prieſts, and Levites about him to be his chaplains, yet did not devolve the work upon them, but himſelf *bleſſed his houſhold.*

When Michal ſaw David dancing before the Lord ſhe deſpiſed him in her heart.

Note, The exerciſes of religion appear very mean in the eyes of thoſe that have little or no religion themſelves.

David juſtifies himſelf in what he did.

Note, 1. We ſhould be afraid of cenſuring the devotion of others, though it may not agree with our ſentiments; becauſe, for ought we know, the heart may be upright in it, and who are we that we ſhould deſpiſe thoſe whom God has accepted?

2. If we can approve ourſelves to God in what we do in religion, and do it as before the Lord, we need not value the cenſures and reproaches of men.

If we appear right in God's eyes, no matter how we appear in the eyes of the world.

3. The more we are vilified for well doing, the more reſolute we ſhould be in it; and hold our religion the faſter, and bind it the cloſer to us, for the endeavours of Satan's agents to ſhake us, and to ſhame us out of it. *I will be yet more vile.*

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1—3. When God in his providence has remarkably done much for us, it ſhould put us upon contriving what we may do for him and his glory. *What ſhall I render unto the Lord?*

When God in his providence gives us reſt, and finds us little to do of worldly buſineſs, we muſt do ſo much the more for God and our ſouls.

We ought to do all we can to encourage and promote the good purpoſes and deſigns of others, and put in a good word, as we have opportunity, to forward a good work.

Ver. 4—17. Next to the happineſs of our ſouls, and the church of God, we would deſire the happineſs of our ſeed, that thoſe who come of us, may be praiſing God on earth, when we are praiſing him in heaven.

Though David came ſhort of making good his purpoſe to build God a houſe, yet God did not come ſhort of making good his promiſe to build him a houſe.

Such is the tenor of the covenant we are under; though there are many failures in our performances, there are none in God's.

Ver. 18—29. It very well becomes the greateſt and beſt of men, even in the midſt of the higheſt advancements, to have low and mean thoughts of themſelves: for the greateſt of men are worms, the

beſt are ſinners, and thoſe that are higheſt advanced have nothing but what they have received.

The perpetuity of the Meſſiah's kingdom, is the deſire and faith of all good people.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1—8. David had too long forgot his obligations to Jonathan, but now at length they are brought to his mind. It is good ſometimes to bethink ourſelves whether there be any promiſes or engagements that we have neglected to make good: better do it late than never.

Good men ſhould ſeek opportunities of doing good. *The liberal deviſeth liberal things*, Iſa. xxxii. 8. For many times the moſt proper objects of our kindneſs and charity are ſuch as will not be light on without enquiry. The moſt neceſſitous are the leaſt clamorous.

Thoſe David enquired after were the remains of the houſe of Saul, to whom he would ſhew kindneſs for Jonathan's ſake.

1. Saul was David's ſworn enemy, and yet he would ſhew kindneſs to his houſe with all his heart, and was forward to do it.

Note, We muſt evidence the ſincerity of our forgiving thoſe that have been any way unjuſt or injurious to us, by being ready, as we have opportunity, to ſhew kindneſs both to them and theirs. This is the way to overcome evil, and to find mercy for ourſelves and ours, when we or they need it.

2. Jonathan was David's ſworn friend, and therefore he would ſhew kindneſs to his houſe. This teaches us to be mindful of our friendſhips, our old friendſhips.

Note, Kindneſs to our friends, even to them and theirs, is one of the laws of our holy religion.

Mephiboſheth accepts the kindneſs of David, with great humility and ſelf-abaſement. Though the ſon of a prince, and the grandſon of a king, yet his family being under guilt and wrath, and himſelf poor and lame, he calls himſelf a dead dog before David.

Note, It is good to have the heart humble under humbling providences. If, when divine providence brings our condition down, divine grace brings our ſpirits down with it, we ſhall be eaſy: and thoſe who thus humble themſelves ſhall be exalted.

Ver. 9—13. Becauſe David was a type of Chriſt, his Lord and ſon, his root and offspring, let his kindneſs to Mephiboſheth ſerve to illuſtrate the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour towards fallen man, which yet he was under no obligation to, as David was to Jonathan. Man was convicted of rebellion againſt God, and like Saul's houſe, under a ſentence of rejection from him; was not only brought low and impoveriſhed, but lame and impotent, made ſo by the fall. The Son of God enquires after this degenerate race, that enquired not after him; comes to ſeek and ſave them. Thoſe of them that humble themſelves before him, and commit themſelves to him, he reſtores them the forfeited inheritance, en-

titles them to a better paradiſe than that which Adam loſt, and takes them into communion with himſelf; ſets them with his children at his table, and feaſts them with the dainties of heaven. Lord, what is man that thou ſhouldſt thus magnify him!

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1—5. Falſe men are ready to think others as falſe as themſelves; and they that bear ill-will to their neighbours, are reſolved not to believe that their neighbours bear any good-will to them.

Ver. 6—13. Chriſt's ſoldiers ſhould ſtrengthen one another's hands in their ſpiritual warfare. The ſtrong muſt ſuccour and help the weak. They that through grace are conquerors over temptation, muſt counſel, and comfort, and pray for, thoſe that are tempted. *When thou art converted ſtrengthen thy brethren*, Luke xxii. 32.

When we make conſcience of doing our duty, we may with the greateſt ſatisfaction leave the event with God; not thinking that our valour binds him to proſper us, but that ſtill he may do as he pleaſeth, yet hoping for his ſalvation in his own way and time.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 6—13. David has ſinned and Bathſheba has ſinned, and both againſt Uriah, and therefore he muſt die; David determines he muſt. Is this the

man whoſe heart ſmote him becauſe he had cut off Saul's ſkirt? Is this he that executed judgment and juſtice to all his people? How can he now do ſo unjuſt a thing? See how fleſhly luſts war againſt the ſoul, and what devaſtations they make in that war: how they blind the eyes, harden the heart, ſear the conſcience, and deprive men of all ſenſe of honour and juſtice! *Whoſo committeth adultery with a woman lacketh underſtanding*, and quite loſeth it; he that doth it deſtroys his own ſoul, Prov. vi. 32.

As the eye of the adulterer, ſo the hand of the murderer ſeeketh concealment, Job xxiv. 14, 15. Works of darkneſs hate the light. When David bravely ſlew Goliah, it was done publickly, and he gloried in it; but when he baſely ſlew Uriah, it muſt be done clandeſtinely, for he is aſhamed of it, and well he may.

But the thing that David had done diſpleaſed the Lord. He had pleaſed himſelf, but diſpleaſed God.

Note, God ſees and hates ſin in his own people. Nay, the nearer any are to God in profeſſion, the more diſpleaſing to him their ſins are; for in them there is more ingratitude, treachery, and reproach, than in the ſins of others. Let none therefore encourage themſelves in ſin by the example of David, for they that ſin as he did, will fall under the diſpleaſure of God as he did. Let us, therefore, ſtand in awe, and ſin not; not ſin after the ſimilitude of his tranſgreſſion.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1—14. Though God may ſuffer his people to fall into ſin, he will not ſuffer them to lie ſtill in it.

They that contrive wickedneſs and command it, are as truly guilty of it as thoſe that execute it.

There is this great evil in the ſcandalous ſins of thoſe that profeſs religion and relation to God, that they furniſh the enemies of God and religion with matter for reproach and blaſphemy, Rom. ii. 24.

Ver. 15—25. The diſeaſes and death of infants, *that have not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion*, eſpecially as they are ſometimes ſadly circumſtanced, are ſenſible proofs of the original ſin in which they are conceived.

The conſideration of our own death ſhould moderate our ſorrow at the death of our relations.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1—20. The caſe of thoſe is very miſerable, whoſe friends, inſtead of admoniſhing and reproving them, flatter them and forward them in their ſinful ways, and are their counſellors and contrivers to do wickedly.

Ver. 21—29. Thoſe ſervants are ill-taught, and thoſe are wicked maſters, that have taught them to obey them in contradiction to God. Thoſe are too

obſequious that will damn their ſouls to pleaſe their maſters, whoſe big words cannot ſecure them from God's wrath. Maſters muſt always command their ſervants, as thoſe that know they alſo have a maſter in heaven.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1—6. We read not of Abſalom's wiſdom, virtue, or learning in the laws, nor had he given any proofs of his love to juſtice, but the contrary; yet he wiſhes he were a judge.

Note, Thoſe are commonly moſt ambitious of preferment, that are leaſt fit for it: the beſt qualified are the moſt modeſt and ſelf-diffident; while it is no better than the ſpirit of an Abſalom, that ſaith, *O that I were a judge in Iſrael!*

Ver. 7—12. It is no new thing for very good men, and very good things, to be made uſe of by deſigning men, to put a colour upon ill practices. When religion is made a ſtalking-horſe, and ſacrifice a ſhoeing-horn, to ſedition and uſurpation, it is not to be wondered at, if ſome that are well affected to religion, as theſe followers of Abſalom here, are impoſed upon by the fallacy, and drawn in to give countenance to that, with their names, which in their heart they abhor, not having known the depths of Satan.

Ver. 13—23. It is the wiſdom of princes, to make ſure the hearts of their ſubjects, for if

they have them, they have their purſes and arms, and all at their ſervice.

Ver. 24—30. Obſerve, 1. David is very ſolicitous for the ſafety of the ark. His heart like Eli's trembles for the ark of God. Note, It argues a good principle to be more concerned for the church's proſperity, than for our own, to *prefer Jeruſalem* before our *chief joy*, Pſalm cxxxvii. 6. the ſucceſs of the goſpel, and the flouriſhing of the church, above our own wealth, credit, eaſe and ſafety, even when they are moſt in hazard.

2. David is very deſirous to return to the enjoyment of the privileges of God's houſe. Note, Gracious ſouls meaſure their comforts and conveniences in this world, by the opportunities they give them of communion with God.

3. He is very ſubmiſſive to the holy will of God, concerning the iſſue of his preſent dark diſpenſation. Note, It is our intereſt as well as duty, cheerfully to acquieſce in the will of God, whatever befals us. That we may not complain of what *is*, let us ſee God's hand in all events; and that we may not be afraid of what *ſhall be*, let us ſee all events in God's hand.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1—4. Great men ought always to be jealous of flatterers, and remember that nature has

given them two ears, that they may hear both ſides..

Ver. 5—14.. We here find how David bore Shimei's curſes much better than he had born Ziba's flatteries; by thoſe he was brought to paſs a wrong judgment upon another, by theſe to paſs a right judgment on himſelf. The world's ſmiles are more dangerous than its frowns.

A humble tender ſpirit will turn reproaches into reproofs, and ſo get good by them.

Nothing more proper to quiet a gracious ſoul under affliction, than to eye the hand of God in it. *I opened not my mouth becauſe thou didſt it.* The ſcourge of the tongue is God's rod.

Tribulation works patience in thoſe that are ſanctified. The more we bear the better able we ſhould be to bear ſtill more. What tries our patience ſhould improve it. The more we are inured to trouble, the leſs we ſhould be ſurprized at it, and not think it ſtrange. Marvel not that enemies are injurious, when even friends are unkind; nor that friends are unkind, when even children are undutiful.

Ver. 15—23. Let us obſerve from this account of Ahithophel's fame for policy,

1. That many excel in worldly wiſdom, who are utterly deſtitute of heavenly grace. The greateſt ſtateſmen are ſeldom the greateſt ſaints.

2. That many times great politicians act moſt fooliſhly for themſelves.

Ahithophel is cried up for an oracle, and yet very unwiſely takes part with Abſalom, who was not only an uſurper, but a ſhatter-brained young fellow, never like to come to good, whoſe fall and the fall of all that adhered to him, any one with the tenth part of the policy that Ahithophel pretended to, might forſee. Well, after all, honeſty is the beſt policy, and will be found ſo at long run.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1—14. The beſt of parents, and the beſt of princes will not think it ſtrange, if they be made uneaſy by thoſe who ſhould be their ſupport and joy, when they conſider what ſons and what ſubjects David himſelf had.

Be it obſerved to the comfort of all that fear God, he turns all men's hearts as the rivers of waters, *though they know not the thoughts of the Lord. He ſtands in the congregation of the mighty*, has an overruling hand in all counſels, and a negative voice in all reſolves, and laughs at men's projects againſt his anointed.

Ver. 22—29. Ahithophel hanged himſelf for vexation that his counſel was not followed.

That will break a proud man's heart that will not break an humble man's ſleep. Now herein we may ſee,

1. Contempt poured upon the wiſdom of man. He that was more renowned for policy than ever

any man was, played the fool with himſelf more than ever any man did. *Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom*, when he ſees one that was ſo great an oracle dying *as a fool dies*.

2. Honour done to the juſtice of God. When the wicked is thus *ſnared in the work of their own hands, and ſunk in a pit of their own digging, the Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth*, and we muſt ſay it is a thing to be marked and meditated upon, Pſalm vii. 15, 16.

3. Prayer anſwered, and an honeſt cauſe ſerved even by its enemies. Now, as David had prayed, Ahithophel's counſel was *turned into fooliſhneſs to himſelf*.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1—8. David ſhewed his affection to the people in being willing to venture with them to the battle againſt Abſalom, and they ſhewed theirs to him by oppoſing it. We muſt never reckon it an affront to be contradicted for our good, and by thoſe that therein conſult our intereſt.

It is no piece of wiſdom to be ſtiff in our reſolutions, but to be willing to hear reaſon, even from our inferiors, and to be over-ruled by their advice, when it appears to be for our own good.

Ver. 9—18. Obſerve concerning Abſalom's death and the manner of it,

1. That his *mule went away from under him*, as if glad to get rid of ſuch a burden, and reſign it to the

ignominious tree. Thus the whole creation groans under the burden of man's corruption, but ſhall ſhortly be delivered from its load, Rom. viii. 21, 22.

2. That he hung *between heaven and earth*, as unworthy of either, as abandoned of both; earth would not keep him, heaven would not take him, hell therefore opens her mouth to receive him.

3. That this was a very ſurprizing unuſual thing; it was fit it ſhould be ſo, his crime being ſo monſtrous. If in his flight his mule had thrown him, and left him half dead upon the ground, till the ſervants of David had come up and diſpatched him, the ſame thing had been done as effectually, but that had been too common a fate for ſo uncommon a criminal.

God will here, as in the caſe of thoſe other rebels, Dathan and Abiram, *create a new thing*, that it may be underſtood, how much *this man has provoked the Lord*, Numb. xvi. 29, 30. Abſalom is here hung up *in terrorem* to frighten children from diſobedience to their parents; See Prov. xxx. 17.

Abſalom being found in this ſituation is diſpatched by Joab and his adherents, and his body diſgracefully diſpoſed of: and now where is the beauty he had been ſo proud of, and for which he had been ſo much admired? Where are his aſpiring projects, and the caſtles he had built in the air? His thoughts periſh, and he with them.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1—8. When we are convinced of a fault we muſt amend it, though we are told of it by our inferiors, and indecently, or in heat and paſſion.

Ver. 16—23. The leſs we have to do with thoſe that are of an angry revengeful ſpirit, and that put us upon doing what is harſh and rigorous, the better.

Ver. 24—30. Mephiboſheth drowns all his cares about his eſtate, in his joy for the king's return. A good man can contentedly bear his own private loſſes and diſappointments, while he ſees Iſrael in peace, and the throne of the ſon of David exalted and eſtabliſhed.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1—3. Obſerve the revolt of Sheba happening immediately upon the cruſhing of Abſalom's rebellion. We muſt not think it ſtrange, while we are here in this world, if the end of one trouble be the beginning of another: deep ſometimes calls unto deep.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 15—22. The moſt powerful enemies are often reſerved for the laſt encounter. David began his glory by the conqueſt of one giant, and here con-

cludes it with the conqueſt of four. Death is a Chriſtian's laſt enemy, and a ſon of Anak; but through him that triumphed for us, we hope, even over that enemy, to be more than conquerors at laſt.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. Obſerve here,

1. That it has often been the lot of God's people to have many enemies, and to be in imminent danger of falling into their hands. Let not thoſe whom God loves, marvel if the world hate them.

2. They that truſt God in the way of duty, ſhall find him a preſent help to them in their greateſt dangers.

3. Thoſe that have received ſignal mercies, and many from God, ought to give him the glory of them. Every new mercy in our hand ſhould put a new ſong into our mouth, even praiſes to our God.

4. We ought to be ſpeedy in our thankful returns to God. *In the day that God delivered David he ſang this ſong.* While the mercy is freſh, and we are moſt affected with it, let the thank-offering be brought, to be kindled with the fire of that affection.

Ver. 2—51. A careful abſtaining from our own iniquity, is one of the beſt evidences of our own integrity; and the teſtimony of our conſciences for us that we have done ſo, will be ſuch a rejoicing, as will not only leſſen the griefs of an afflicted ſtate,

but increaſe the comforts of an advanced ſtate. David reflected with more comfort upon his victories over his own iniquity, than upon his conqueſt of Goliath, and all the hoſt of the uncircumciſed Philiſtines; and the witneſs of his own heart to his uprightneſs was ſweeter though more ſilent muſic, than theirs that ſang, *David has ſlain his ten thouſands*. If a great man be a good man, his goodneſs will be much more his ſatisfaction than his greatneſs.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1—7. When we find death approaching, we ſhould endeavour both to honour God, and to edify thoſe about us with our laſt words. Let thoſe that have had long experience of God's goodneſs, and the pleaſantneſs of the ways of wiſdom, when they come to finiſh their courſe, leave a record of thoſe experiences, and bear their teſtimony to the truth of the promiſe. We have upon record the laſt words of Jacob and Moſes, and here of David, deſigned, as thoſe, for a legacy to them that were left behind.

Ver. 8—39. Chriſt the Son of David has worthies too, as well as David, who, like David's, are influenced by his example, fight his battles againſt the ſpiritual enemies of his kingdom; and in his ſtrength are more than conquerors. Chriſt's apoſtles were his immediate attendants, did and ſuffered

great things for him, and at length came to reign with him. They are mentioned with honour in the New Teſtament, as theſe of David's are in the Old, eſpecially Rev. xxi. 14. Nay, all the good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt have their names better preſerved than even theſe worthies have; for they are written in heaven. This honour have all his ſaints.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1—9. Many things, not in themſelves ſinful, turn into ſin to us by our inordinate delight in them. Joab was aware of David's vanity, in his ordering him to number the people, but he himſelf was not. It would be good for us to have a friend that would faithfully admoniſh us, when we ſay or do any thing proud or vain-glorious; becauſe we often do ſo, and are not ourſelves aware of it.

Ver. 10—17. David, after the people were numbered, reflected upon it with great regret, and his heart reproached him for it.

Note, It is a good thing, when a man has ſinned, to have a heart within him to ſmite him for it; it is a good ſign of a principle of grace in the heart, and a good ſtep towards repentance and reformation.

Sin brings men into ſtraits: wiſe and good men often diſtreſs themſelves by their own folly.

True penitents, the more they receive of God's ſparing, pardoning mercy, the more humbled they are for ſin, and the more reſolved againſt it. *They*

ſhall be aſhamed when I am pacified towards them, Ezek. xvi. 63.

Obſerve how David intercedes for the people, whoſe bitter lamentations made his heart to ake, and his ears to tingle. *Theſe ſheep what have they done?* Done! why they had done much amiſs. It was their ſin that provoked God to leave David to himſelf to do as he did; yet, as became a penitent, he is ſevere upon his own faults, while he extenuates theirs.

Moſt people, when God's judgments are abroad charge others with being the cauſe of them, and care not who falls by them, ſo they can eſcape; but David's penitent and public ſpirit was otherwiſe affected. Let this mind us of the grace of our Lord Jeſus, who gave himſelf for our ſins, was willing God's hand ſhould be againſt him, that we might eſcape. The ſhepherd was ſmitten that the ſheep might be ſpared.

Ver. 18—25. Chriſt is our altar, and our ſacrifice; and in him alone we may expect to find favour with God, to eſcape his wrath, and the ſword, the flaming ſword of that cherubim, which *keeps the way of the tree of life.*

I KINGS.

CHAPTER I. VER. 5—10.

DAVID had made a fondling of his ſon Adonijah, and he in return made a fool of his father. They that honour their ſons more than God, as they do who keep them not under a good diſcipline, thereby forfeit the honour they might expect from them.

It argues a very baſe and wicked mind for children to inſult over their parents, becauſe of the infirmities of their age.

We are told who they were, that were of ſuch approved fidelity to David, that Adonijah had not the confidence ſo much as to propoſe it to them, Zadok, Benaiah, and Nathan. A man that has given proofs of his reſolute adherence to that which is good, ſhall not be aſked to do an ill thing.

Ver. 11—31. Good men would do their duty if they were minded of it, and put upon it, and told what occaſion there is for them to appear: and thoſe who are thus their remembrancers do them a real kindneſs, as Nathan here did to David.

Ver. 32—40. The wiſeſt and beſt man in the world deſires his children may be wiſer and better than he, for he himſelf deſires to be wiſer and better than he is; and wiſdom and goodneſs are true greatneſs.

Ver. 41—53. It is a great ſatisfaction to good men when they are going out of the world, to ſee the affairs of their families in a good poſture, their children riſing up in their ſtead to ſerve God and their generation, and eſpecially to ſee peace upon Iſrael, and the eſtabliſhment of it.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 12—25. Children not only when grown up, but when grown great, muſt give honour to their parents, and carry themſelves dutifully and reſpectfully towards them. *Deſpiſe not thy mother when ſhe is old.*

Ver. 26—34. Thoſe that ſhew kindneſs to God's people, ſhall have it remembered to their advantage one time or other.

They who by a lively faith take hold on Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, with a reſolution if they periſh to periſh there, ſhall find in him a more powerful protection than Joab found at the horns of the altar.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 5—15. Thoſe who are employed in public ſtations ought to be very ſenſible of the weight and importance of this work, and their own inſufficiency for it; and then they are qualified for divine conduct and inſtruction. St. Paul's queſtion, *Who is ſufficient for theſe things?* is much like Solomon's here,

Who is able to judge this thy ſo great a people? Abſalom that was a fool, wiſhed himſelf a judge; Solomon, that was a wiſe man, trembles at the undertaking, and ſuſpects his own fitneſs for it. The more knowing and conſiderate men are, the better acquainted they are with their own weakneſs, and the more jealous of themſelves.

That is the beſt knowledge, which will be ſerviceable to us in doing our duty; and ſo that knowledge is, which enables us to *diſcern between good and bad*, right and wrong, ſin and duty, truth and falſehood, ſo as not to be impoſed upon by falſe colours, in judging either of others actions, or of our own.

Thoſe are accepted of God, who prefer ſpiritual bleſſings before temporal, and are more ſolicitous to be found in the way of our duty, than in the way to preferment.

Let us ſee here in Solomon's prayer,

1. That the way to obtain ſpiritual bleſſings, is to be importunate for them, to wreſtle with God in prayer for them, as Solomon did for wiſdom, aſking that only, as the *one thing needful.*

2. That the way to temporal bleſſings, is to be indifferent to them and to refer ourſelves to God concerning them.

Solomon has wiſdom given him, becauſe he *did* aſk it, and wealth becauſe he did *not.*

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1—9. In wealth, honour, and power, Hiram was very much inferior to Solomon, yet Solomon has occaſion to be beholden to him, and begs his favour.

Let us never look with diſdain on thoſe below us, becauſe we know not how ſoon we may need them.

If Tyre ſupplies Iſrael with craftſmen, Iſrael will ſupply Tyre with corn, Ezek. xxvii. 17. Thus, by the wiſe diſpoſal of providence, one country has need of another, and is benefited by another, that there may be mutual correſpondence and dependence, to the glory of God our common parent.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 15—38. Let us ſee what was typified by Solomon's temple.

1. Chriſt is the true temple: he himſelf ſpake of the temple of his body, John ii. 21. God himſelf prepared him his body, Heb. x. 5. *In him dwell the fulneſs of the godhead*, as the Shechinah in the temple; in him meet all God's ſpiritual Iſrael; through him we have acceſs with confidence to God; all the angels of God, thoſe bleſſed cherubim, have a charge to worſhip him.

2. Every believer is a living temple, in whom the

Spirit of God dwelleth, 1 Cor. iii. 16. We are not only wonderfully made by the divine providence, but more wonderfully made anew by the divine grace. This living temple is built upon Chriſt as its foundation, and will be perfected in due time.

3. The goſpel church is the myſtical temple; it grows to *a holy temple in the Lord*, Eph. ii. 21. enriched and beautified with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, as Solomon's temple with gold and precious ſtones; only Jews built the tabernacle, but Gentiles join with them in building the temple; even ſtrangers and foreigners, are built up an *habitation of God*, Eph. ii. 19, 22. The temple was divided into the holy place and the moſt holy, the courts of it into the outer and inner; ſo there is the viſible and the inviſible church; the door into the temple was wider than that into the oracle: many enter into profeſſion, that come ſhort of ſalvation. This temple is built firm, upon a rock not to be taken down, as the tabernacle of the Old Teſtament was. The temple was long in preparing, but was built at laſt; the top-ſtone of the goſpel church will at length be brought forth with ſhoutings, and pity there ſhould be the claſhing of axes and hammers in the building of it; angels are miniſtring ſpirits, attending the church on all ſides, and all the members of it.

4. Heaven is the everlaſting temple; there the church will be fixed and no longer moveable; the ſtreets of the New Jeruſalem, in alluſion to the flooring of the temple, are ſaid to be of pure gold, Rev.

xxi. 21. the cherubim there always attend the throne of glory. The temple was uniform, and in heaven there is the perfection of beauty and harmony. In Solomon's temple, there was no noiſe of axes and hammers; every thing is quiet and ſerene in heaven; all that ſhall be ſtones in that building, muſt in the preſent ſtate of probation and preparation, be fitted and made ready for it, muſt be hewn and ſquared by the divine grace, and ſo made meet for a place there.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 12—21. We have then the beſt ſenſe of God's mercies, when we run up thoſe ſtreams to the fountain of the covenant, and compare what God doth with what he hath ſaid.

God approved of David's purpoſe to build the temple. *Thou didſt well that it was in thine heart.* Sincere intentions to do good ſhall be graciouſly approved and accepted of God, though providence prevent our putting them in execution. *The deſire of a man is his kindneſs.* See 2 Cor. viii. 12.

Whatever good we do, we muſt look upon it as the performance of God's promiſe to us, rather than the performance of our promiſes to him. The more we do for God, the more we are indebted to him; for our ſufficiency is of him, and not of ourſelves.

Ver. 22—53. The experiences we have had of God's performing his promiſes, ſhould encourage us

to depend upon them, put them in ſuit, and plead them with God: and thoſe who expect farther mercies muſt be thankful for former mercies.

Ver. 54—61. Solomon ſolemnly charges his people to continue and perſevere in their duty to God. His admonition at parting is, *Let your heart be perfect with the Lord our God:* let your obedience be univerſal without dividing, upright without diſſembling, and conſtant without declining; this is evangelical perfection.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 15—28. Solomon got much by his merchandiſe, and yet has directed us to a better trade, within reach of the pooreſt; having aſſured us from his own experience of both, that the *merchandiſe of wiſdom is better than the merchandiſe of ſilver, and the gain thereof than fine gold*, Prov. iii. 14.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1—8. David had multiplied wives too much, and perhaps that made Solomon preſume it lawful. Note, Thoſe that are in reputation for religion, if in any thing they ſet an ill example, know not what miſchief they may do by it, particularly to their own children. One ill act of a good man may be of more ill conſequence to others than twenty of a wicked man. Probably So-

lomon, when he began to multiply wives, intended not to exceed his father's number; but the way of ſin is down-hill, they that are got into it, cannot eaſily ſtop themſelves.

Let us now pauſe a while and lament Solomon's fall, and we may juſtly ſtand and wonder at it.

Strange! 1. That Solomon in his old age ſhould be enſnared with fleſhly luſts, youthful luſts; as we muſt never preſume upon the ſtrength of our reſolutions, ſo neither upon the weakneſs of our corruptions, ſo as to be ſecure and off our guard.

2. That ſo wiſe a man as Solomon was, ſo famed for a quick underſtanding and ſound judgment, ſhould ſuffer himſelf to be made ſuch a fool of by a parcel of ſilly women.

3. That one who had ſo often and ſo plainly warned others of the danger of the love of women, ſhould himſelf be ſo wretchedly bewitched with it: it is eaſier to ſee a miſchief and to ſhew it others than to ſhun it ourſelves.

4. That ſo good a man, ſo jealous for the worſhip of God, that had been converſant with divine things, and who prayed that excellent prayer at the dedication of the temple, ſhould do theſe ill things. Is this Solomon? Is all his wiſdom and devotion come to this at laſt?

Never was gallant ſhip ſo wrecked; never was crown ſo profaned.

What ſhall we ſay to this? Why God permitted it, is not for us to enquire; his way is in the

ſea, and his path in the great waters; he knew how to bring glory to himſelf out of it.

But it concerns us to enquire what good uſe we may make of it.

1. Let him that thinks he ſtands take heed leſt he fall. We ſee how weak we are of ourſelves without the grace of God: let us therefore live in a conſtant dependance on that grace.

2. See the danger of a proſperous condition, and how hard it is to overcome the temptations of it. Solomon, like Jeſhurun, waxed fat, and then kicked. The food convenient which Agur prayed for, is ſafer and better than the food abundant, which Solomon was even ſurfeited with.

3. See what need thoſe have to ſtand upon their guard who have made a great profeſſion of religion, and ſhewed themſelves forward and zealous in devotion, becauſe the devil will ſet upon them moſt violently, and if they miſcarry themſelves, the reproach is the greater.

It is the evening that commends the day; let us therefore fear leſt having run well we ſeem to come ſhort.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1—15. Solomon had a thouſand wives and concubines, yet we read but of one ſon he had to bear up his name, and he a fool. It is ſaid Hoſ. iv. 10. *They ſhall commit whoredom, and ſhall not increaſe.* Sin is an ill way of building up a family. Rehoboam

was the ſon of the wiſeſt of men, yet did not inherit his father's wiſdom; and then it ſtood him in little ſtead to inherit his father's throne.

Neither wiſdom nor grace run in the blood. Solomon came to the crown very young, yet he was then a wiſe man; Rehoboam, at forty years old, when men muſt be wiſe if ever they are, was yet fooliſh. Wiſdom doth not go by age, nor is it the multitude of years, nor the advantage of education that reaches it. Solomon's court was a mart of wiſdom, and the rendezvous of learned men, and Rehoboam the darling of the court, and yet all was not ſufficient to make him a wiſe man. *The race is not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong.* It is of great conſequence to young people that are ſetting out in the world, whom they aſſociate with, accommodate themſelves to, and depend upon for advice. If they reckon thoſe that feed their pride, gratify their vanity, and farther them in their pleaſures, their beſt friends, they are already marked for ruin.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 7—20. Obſerve the character given of Abijah the ſon of Jeroboam, *In him was found ſome good thing towards the Lord God of Iſrael, in the houſe of Jeroboam.* Note 1. Thoſe are good, *in whom are good things towards the Lord God of Iſrael.* Good inclinations, good intentions, good deſires towards him.

2. Where there is but ſome good thing of that kind, it will be found: God that ſeeks it, ſees it, be it never ſo little, and is pleaſed with it.

3. A little grace goes a great way with great folks. It is ſo rare to find princes well affected to religion, that when they are ſo, they are worthy of double honour.

4. Pious diſpoſitions are in a peculiar manner amiable and acceptable, when they are found in thoſe that are young. The divine image in miniature, has a peculiar beauty and luſtre in it.

5. Thoſe that are good in bad times and places, ſhine very bright in the eyes of God. A good child *in the houſe of Jeroboam*, is a miracle of divine grace: to be there untainted, is like being in the fiery furnace unhurt, unſinged.

Obſerve the care taken of him: he only of all Jeroboam's family ſhall die in honour; ſhall be buried and ſhall be lamented, as one that lived deſired.

Note, Thoſe that are diſtinguiſhed by the divine grace, ſhall be diſtinguiſhed by the divine providence.

Sometimes God makes quick work with ſinners: he did ſo with the houſe of Jeroboam. It was not twenty-four years from his firſt elevation to the final extirpation of his family.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1—7. Elijah had but one meal brought him at a time, every morning and every evening, to teach him not to take thought for the morrow. Let thoſe who have but from hand to mouth learn to live upon providence, and truſt God for *the bread of the day in the day.*

The caterers that brought Elijah his food were very unlikely to do any ſuch thing, the ravens brought it him. They are birds of prey, greedy devouring creatures, more likely to have taken his meat from him, or to have picked out his eyes, Prov. xxx. 17. but thus Sampſon's riddle is again unriddled; *out of the eater comes forth meat.*

Let us learn from hence

1. To acknowledge the ſovereignty and power of God over all the creatures: he can make what uſe he pleaſeth of them, either for judgment or mercy.

2. To encourage ourſelves in God in the greateſt ſtraights, and never to diſtruſt him. He that could furniſh a table in the wilderneſs, and make ravens purveyors, cooks, and ſervitors to his prophet, is able to ſupply all our needs according to his riches in glory.

Ver. 8—16. Surely the increaſe of this widow's faith, (who at his requeſt ſupplied the prophet's wants, when her own ſtock was ſo nearly exhauſted) to ſuch a degree as to enable her thus to deny herſelf and to depend upon the divine promiſe, was as

great a miracle in the kingdom of grace, as the increaſe of her oil was in the kingdom of providence. Happy are they that can thus, againſt hope, believe, and obey in hope.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1—16. *Obadiah feared the Lord greatly*, and *he feared the Lord from his youth.*

Note, Early piety, it is to be hoped, will be eminent piety. Thoſe that are good betimes are likely to be very good: he that feared God from his youth, came to fear him greatly.

Obadiah, an eminently good man, was governor of wicked Ahab's houſe.

Note, Thoſe who profeſs religion, ſhould ſtudy to recommend themſelves to the eſteem even of thoſe that are without, by their integrity, fidelity, and application to buſineſs.

Thoſe fear God greatly that keep up the fear of him in bad times and places; thus Obadiah did. God has his remnant among all ſorts, high and low. There were ſaints in Nero's houſhold, and in Ahab's.

Obadiah fed God's prophets, *with bread and water.* See how God wonderfully raiſeth up friends for his miniſters and people; for their ſhelter in difficult times, even where one ſhould leaſt expect them. Bread and water were now ſcarce commodities, yet Obadiah will find a competency of both for God's

prophets, to keep them alive for ſervice hereafter, though now they were laid aſide.

Ver. 17—20. Elijah was called by Ahab, a troubler of Iſrael. Note, It has been the lot of the beſt and moſt uſeful men to be called and counted the troublers of the land, and to be run upon and run down as public grievances. Even Chriſt and his apoſtles were thus miſ-repreſented, Acts xvii. 6.

Ver. 21—40. The ſervice of God and the ſervice of ſin, the dominion of Chriſt, and the dominion of our luſts, theſe are the two things which it is dangerous halting between.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 9—18. It concerns us often to enquire, whether we be in our place, and in the way of our duty. Am I where I ſhould be? Whither God calls me, where my buſineſs lies, and where I may be uſeful?

The wind, and earthquake, and fire, did not make Elijah cover his face, but the ſtill voice did. Gracious ſouls are more affected by the tender mercies of the Lord, than by his terrors.

There were more righteous men in Iſrael than Elijah apprehended.

Note, 1. In times of the greateſt degeneracy and apoſtacy, God has always had, and will have, a remnant faithful to him; ſome that keep their integrity, and do not go down the ſtream.

2. It is God's work to preſerve that remnant, and diſtinguiſh them from the reſt, for without his grace they could not have diſtinguiſhed themſelves.

3. It is but a little remnant in compariſon with the degenerate race. What is ſeven thouſand to the thouſands of Iſrael?

4. God's faithful ones are often his hidden ones, Pſalm lxxxiii. 3. and the viſible church ſcarce viſible; the wheat is loſt in the chaff, and the gold in the droſs, till the ſifting, refining, ſeparating day comes.

5. *The Lord knows them that are* his, though we do not.

6. There are more good people in the world, than ſome wiſe and holy men think there are. Their jealouſy of themſelves, and for God, makes them think the corruption is univerſal; but God ſees not as they do. When we come to heaven, as we ſhall miſs a great many, whom we thought to have met there, ſo we ſhall meet a great many, whom we little thought to have met there.

God's love often proves larger than man's charity, and more extenſive.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 31—43. This encouragement poor ſinners have to repent and humble themſelves before God; have we not heard that the God of Iſrael is a merciful God? Have we not found him ſo? Let us therefore

rend our hearts and return unto him, Joel ii. 13. That is evangelical repentance, which flows from an apprehenſion *of the mercy of God in Chriſt: there is forgiveneſs with him.*

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1—4. Ahab was diſcontented becauſe Naboth would not let him have his vineyard.

Note, 1. Diſcontent is a ſin that is its own puniſhment, and makes men torment themſelves: it makes the ſpirit ſad, the body ſick, and all the enjoyments ſour; it is the heavineſs of the heart, and the rottenneſs of the bones.

2. It is a ſin that is its own parent, it ariſes not from the condition, but from the mind; as we find Paul content in a priſon, ſo Ahab diſcontent in a palace. He had all the delights of Canaan, that pleaſant land at command: the wealth of a kingdom, the pleaſures of a court, and the honours and powers of a throne; and yet *all this avails him nothing* without Naboth's vineyard. Inordinate deſires expoſe men to continual vexation, and they that are diſpoſed to fret, be they never ſo happy, will always find ſomething or other to fret at.

Ver. 5—16. Jezebel ordered a faſt to be proclaimed, with a view to compaſs the death of Naboth.

Note, There is no wickedneſs ſo vile, ſo horrid,

but religion has ſometimes been made a cloak and cover for it.

We muſt not think the worſe of faſting and praying for their having been ſometimes thus abuſed; but much the worſe of thoſe wicked deſigns that have at any time been carried on under ſuch diſguiſes.

Ver. 17—29. Ahab counteth the prophet Elijah his enemy.

Note, That man's condition is very miſerable, that has made the word of God his enemy; and very deſperate, that reckons the miniſters of that word his enemies, becauſe they *tell him the truth*, Gal. iv. 16.

Elijah denounceth God's wrath againſt Ahab.

Note, Thoſe that give up themſelves to ſin, will certainly be found out, ſooner or later, to their unſpeakable horror and amazement.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 29—40. Ahab received his mortal wound in the battle, notwithſtanding his endeavours to ſecure himſelf in the habit of a private centinel. Let no man think to hide himſelf from God's judgments, no, not in maſquerade.

The Syrian that ſhot him, little thought of doing ſuch a piece of ſervice to God and his king, for he *drew a bow at a venture*, not aiming particularly at any man, yet God ſo directed the arrow that,

1. He hit the right perſon, the man that was

marked for deſtruction, whom if they had taken alive, as was deſigned, perhaps Benhadad would have ſpared. Thoſe cannot eſcape with life, whom God hath doomed to death.

2. He hit him in the right place, *between the joints of the harneſs*, the only place about him where this arrow of death could find entrance. No armour is proof againſt the darts of divine vengeance. Caſe the criminal in ſteel, and it is all one, *he that made him can make his ſword to approach him.* That which to us ſeems altogether caſual, is done by the determinate counſel and fore-knowledge of God.

II KINGS.

CHAPTER I. VER. 1—8.

We ſhould be more thoughtful what will become of us after death, than how, or when, or where we ſhall die; and more deſirous to be told how we may carry ourſelves well in our ſickneſs, and get good to our ſouls by it, than whether we ſhall recover from it.

Ver. 9—18. There is nothing to be got by contending with God. If we would prevail with him, it muſt be by ſupplication. If we would not fall before God, we muſt bow before him; and thoſe are wiſe for themſelves who learn ſubmiſſion from the fatal conſequences of others' obſtinacy.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1—8. Elijah, before his departure, viſited the ſchools of the prophets, and took leave of them.

Note, Thoſe that are going to heaven themſelves ought to be concerned for thoſe they leave behind them on earth; and to leave with them their experiences, teſtimonies, counſels and prayers. 2 Pet. i. 15.

When Chriſt ſaid, with triumph, *Now I am no more in this world*, he added with tenderneſs, *but theſe are; Father keep them.*

The miraculous dividing of the river Jordan was the preface to Elijah's tranſlation into the heavenly Canaan, as it had been to the entrance of Iſrael into the earthly Canaan.

When God will take up his faithful ones to heaven, death is the Jordan, which, immediately before their tranſlation, they muſt paſs through, and they find a way through it, a ſafe and comfortable way.

The death of Chriſt has divided thoſe waters, that the ranſomed of the Lord may paſs over; *O death where is thy ſting?* thy hurt, thy terror!

Ver. 9—12. Eliſha prayed for a double portion of the ſpirit of Elijah. Note, We all ought, both miniſters and people, to ſet before us the examples of our predeceſſors, to labour after their ſpirit, and to be earneſt with God for that grace which carried them through their work, and enabled them to finiſh well.

Ver. 19—25. Let children be afraid of ſpeaking naughty words, for God takes notice what they ſay. Let them not mock at any for their defects in mind or body, but pity them rather; eſpecially let them know, it is at their peril if they jeer God's people or miniſters, and ſcoff at any for well-doing. Let parents that would have comfort in their children train them up well, and do their utmoſt betimes to drive out the fooliſhneſs that is bound up in their hearts.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1—7. Obſerve reſpecting the widow's oil, that

1. It was to be multiplied in the pouring, as the other widow's meal in the ſpending. The way to increaſe what we have, is to uſe it: to him that ſo hath ſhall be given. It is not hoarding the talents, but trading with them, that doubles them.

2. It muſt be poured out by herſelf, not by Eliſha or ſome of the ſons of the prophets, to intimate, that it is upon our careful and diligent endeavours that we may expect the bleſſing of God to enrich us, both for this world and the other.

The widow was firſt to pay her debt with the money ſhe received for her oil, and then ſhe and her children were to live upon the remainder. It is one of the fundamental laws of our religion, that we render to all their due, pay every juſt debt, give every body their own, though we have never ſo little for ourſelves; and this not of conſtraint but willingly and without grudging; not only for wrath, to avoid being ſued, but alſo for conſcience ſake. They that bear an honeſt mind, cannot with pleaſure eat their daily bread, unleſs it be their own bread. From hence

1. Let thoſe that are poor and in diſtreſs, be encouraged to truſt God for ſupply in the way of

duty: *verily thou ſhalt be fed*, though not feaſted. It is true we cannot now expect miracles, yet we may expect mercies, if we wait on God, and ſeek to him.

Let widows particularly, and prophets' widows in a ſpecial manner, depend upon him to preſerve them and their fatherleſs children alive, for to them he will be a huſband and a father.

2. Let thoſe whom God hath bleſſed with plenty uſe it for the glory of God, and under the direction of his word.

Let them do juſtly with it, as this widow did, and ſerve God chearfully in the uſe of it.

Ver. 18—37. When God calls away our deareſt relations by death, it becomes us quietly to ſay *it is well* both with us and them. It is well, for all is well that God doth; all is well with them that are gone, if they are gone to heaven; and all is well with us that ſtay behind, if by the affliction we are furthered in our way thither.

In the raiſing of dead ſouls to ſpiritual life, miniſters can do no more by their own power than Gehazi here could: they lay the word, like the prophets' ſtaff, before their faces; but there is neither voice nor hearing, till Chriſt by his Spirit comes himſelf: the letter alone kills, it is the Spirit that gives life.

It is not prophecying upon dry bones that will put life into them; breath muſt come from heaven and breathe upon thoſe ſlain.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1—8. Naaman was a mighty man of valour, but he was a leper.

Note, 1. No man's greatneſs, or honour, or intereſt, valour, or victory, can ſet him out of the reach of the ſoreſt calamities of human life: there is many a ſickly, crazy body under rich and gay clothing.

2. Every man has ſome *but* or other in his character, ſomething that blemiſheth and diminiſheth him, ſome alloy to his grandeur, ſome damp to his joy; very happy, very good, yet in ſomething or other not ſo good as he ſhould be, nor ſo happy as he would be. Naaman was as great as the world could make him, and yet (as Biſhop *Hall* expreſſeth it) the baſeth ſlave in Syria would not change ſkins with him.

Ver. 20—27. Gehazi was puniſhed with Naaman's leproſy for his wicked covetouſneſs and lying, by which he got Naaman's money.

Note, *The getting of treaſures by a lying tongue, is a vanity toſſed to and fro of them that ſeek death*, Prov. xxi. 6. Thoſe who get wealth by fraud and injuſtice, cannot expect either the comfort or the continuance of it. What was Gehazi profited, though he gained his two talents, yet when thereby he loſt his health, his honour, his peace, his ſervice,

and if repentance prevented not, his ſoul for ever? See Job xx. 12, &c.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1—7. We ought to be as careful of that which is borrowed, as of that which is our own, that it receive no damage, becauſe we muſt love our neighbour as ourſelves, and do as we would be done by. It is likely this prophet, who while he was felling a beam the ax-head fell into the water, was poor and had not wherewithal to pay for the ax, which made the loſs of it ſo much the greater trouble. To thoſe that bear an honeſt mind, the ſoreſt grievance of poverty is not ſo much their own want and diſgrace, as their being by it rendered unable to pay their juſt debts.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 7—15. It is not long ſince Benhadad had ſent a great force to treat Eliiha as an enemy, chap. vi. 14. yet now he courts him as a prophet. Note, Among other inſtances of the change of men's minds by ſickneſs and affliction, this is one, that it often gives them other thoughts of God's miniſters; and teacheth them to value the counſels and prayers of thoſe whom they had hated and deſpiſed.

Hazael is mightily ſurpriſed at the prophet's prediction reſpecting the wickedneſs and cruelty of

which he would be guilty, when he came to be king over Syria.

It is poſſible for a wicked man, under the convictions and reſtraints of natural conſcience, to expreſs great abhorrence of a ſin, and yet afterwards be well reconciled to it.

Thoſe that are little and low in the world, cannot imagine how ſtrong the temptations of power and proſperity are, which, if ever they arrive to, they will find how deceitful their hearts were, and how much worſe than they ſuſpected.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 11—15. Note, Thoſe that have no religion, commonly ſpeak with diſdain of thoſe that are religious, and look upon them as crack-brained. They ſaid of our Saviour, *he is beſide himſelf*: of John Baptiſt, *he has a devil*, is a poor melancholy man; of St. Paul, that much learning had made him mad. The higheſt wiſdom is thus repreſented as folly, and thoſe that beſt underſtand themſelves are looked upon as beſide themſelves.

Ver. 30—37. Jezebel's name no where remained, but ſtigmatized in ſacred writ. They could not ſo much as ſay, this is Jezebel's duſt; this is Jezebel's grave; or, this is Jezebel's ſeed. Thus the name of the wicked ſhall rot, rot above ground.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 29—36. Jehu departed from the ſins of Ahab, but not from the ſins of Jeroboam; diſcarded Baal, but adhered to the calves. The worſhip of Baal was indeed the greater evil, and more heinous in the ſight of God; but the worſhip of the calves was a great evil, and true converſion is not only from *groſs* ſin, but from *all* ſin; not only from falſe gods but from falſe worſhips. The worſhip of Baal weakned and diminiſhed Iſrael, and made them beholden to the Sidonians, and therefore he could eaſily part with that: but the worſhip of the calves was a politic idolatry, was begun and kept up for reaſons of ſtate, to prevent the return of the ten tribes to the houſe of David, and therefore Jehu clave to that. True converſion is not only from *waſteful* ſins, but from *gainful* ſins; not only from thoſe ſins that are deſtructive to the ſecular intereſt, but from thoſe that ſupport and befriend it; in forſaking which is the great trial, whether we can deny ourſelves and truſt God.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1—3. It is a great mercy to young people, and eſpecially to young princes and young gentlemen, to be under a good conduct, and to have thoſe about them that will inſtruct them to do *that which is right in the ſight of the Lord*, and they then do wiſely and

well for themſelves, when they are willing to be counſelled and ruled by ſuch: *a child left to himſelf brings his mother to ſhame*, but a child left to ſuch a tuition may bring himſelf to honour and comfort.

Ver. 4—16. They who have experienced the comfort and benefit of religious aſſemblies will make the reproach of them their burden, (Zeph. iii. 18.) the ſupport of them their care, and the proſperity of them their chief joy.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 10—19. When king Joaſh heard of the prophet Eliſha's ſickneſs, he came to viſit him and to receive his dying counſel and bleſſing, and it was no diſparagement to him, though a king, thus to honour one whom God honoured.

Note, It may turn much to our ſpiritual advantage, to attend the ſick-beds and death-beds of good miniſters and other good men, that we may learn to die, and may be encouraged in religion by the living comforts they have from it in a dying hour.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1—8. The great piety of Hezekiah was the more wonderful, becauſe his father was very wicked and vile, one of the worſt of the kings, yet he was one of the beſt, which may intimate to us,

1. That what good there is in any, it is not of nature but of grace, free grace, ſovereign grace,

which, contrary to nature, grafts into the good olive, that which was wild by nature, Rom. xi. 24.

2. That grace gets over the greateſt difficulties and diſadvantages. Ahaz, it is likely gave his ſon a bad education, as well as a bad example. Urijah, his prieſt, perhaps, had the tuition of him; his attendants and companions, we may ſuppoſe, ſuch as were addicted to idolatry, and yet Hezekiah became eminently good. When God's grace will work what can hinder it?

The brazen ſerpent was originally of divine inſtitution, and yet, becauſe it had been abuſed to idolatry, Hezekiah broke it to pieces. Good things, when idolized are better parted with than kept.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1—7. Hezekiah in his diſtreſs, in the houſe of the Lord found a place both of reſt and refuge, a treaſury, a magazine, a council-chamber, and all he needed, all in God.

Note, When the church's enemies are very daring and threatening, it is the wiſdom and duty of the church's friends to apply themſelves to God, appeal to him, and leave their cauſe with him.

Hezekiah ſent to the prophet Iſaiah, by honourable meſſengers, in token of the great reſpect he had for him, to deſire his prayers. Note,

1. It is very deſirable, and what we ſhould be deſirous of when we are in trouble, to have the prayers

of our friends for us. In begging it, we honour God, we honour prayer, and we honour our brethren.

2. When we desire the prayers of others for us, that must not excuse us from praying for ourselves.

When Hezekiah sent to Isaiah to pray for him, he himself *went into the house of the Lord* to offer up his own prayers.

3. Those who speak from God to us, we should in a particular manner desire to speak to God for us. *He is a prophet and he shall pray for thee*, Gen. xx. 7. The great prophet is the great intercessor.

4. Those are likely to prevail with God that lift up their prayers, i. e. that lift up their hearts in prayer.

5. When the interests of God's church are brought very low, so that there is but a remnant left, few friends, and those weak and at a loss, then it is time to *lift up our prayer for that remnant*.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1—11. Isaiah directed means to be used for the recovery of Hezekiah out of that affliction which threatened his life.

Note, 1. It is our duty when we are sick, to make use of such means as are proper to help nature, else we do not trust God, but tempt him.

2. Plain and ordinary medicines must not be despised, for many such God has graciously made serviceable to man, in consideration of the poor.

3. What God appoints he will succeed and make effectual.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1—10. In the repairing of the temple *the book of the law*, that had been long loſt and miſſing, was happily found and brought unto king Joſiah: and we now have reaſon to thank God upon our knees for that happy providence, by which Hilkiah found this book at this time, found it when *he ſought it not*, Iſaiah lxv. 1. If the holy ſcriptures had not been of God, they had not been in being at this day. God's care of the Bible, is a plain indication of his intereſt in it.

Ver. 11—20. We hear no more of the repairing of the temple: no doubt that good work went on well; but the book of the law that was found in it fills us now, and well it may. It is not laid up in the king's cabinet as a piece of antiquity, a rarity to be admired, but it is read before the king. Thoſe put the trueſt honour upon their Bibles that ſtudy them, and converſe with them daily; feed on that bread, and walk by that light. Men of honour and buſineſs muſt look upon an acquaintance with God's word to be their beſt buſineſs and honour.

Thoſe that moſt *fear* God's wrath, are leaſt likely to *feel* it.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 25—30. Joſiah was a nonſuch for ſincerity and zeal in carrying on a work of reformation. *He turned to the Lord with all his heart.* Thoſe make nothing of their religion, that do not make heart-work of it.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 8—21. The city and temple of Jeruſalem are burnt by the Chaldeans.

By the burning of the temple God would ſhew how little he cares for the external pomp of his worſhip, when the life and power of religion is neglected. The people truſted to the temple, as if that would protect them in their ſins, Jer. vii. 4. but God by this lets them know, that when they had profaned it, they would find it but a refuge of lies.

Ver. 22—30. The death of afflicted ſaints is to them ſuch a change as this was to Jehoiachim, it will releaſe them out of their priſon, ſhake off the body, that priſon-garment, and open the way to their advancement; will ſend them to the throne, to the table of the king of kings, the glorious liberty of God's children.

I CHRONICLES

CHAPTER IV. VER. 1—10.

JABEZ's mother called him by that name because she bare him with sorrow.

Perhaps she called him Jabez as Rachel called her son Ben-oni, when she was dying of the sorrow: or if she recovered it, yet thus she recorded it,

1. That it might be a continual memorandum to herself to be thankful to God as long as she lived, for supporting her under, and bringing her through, that sorrow. It may be of use to be often minded of our sorrows, that we may always have such thoughts of things as we had in the day of our affliction, and may learn to rejoice with trembling.

2. That it might likewise be a memorandum to him, what this world is into which she bare him, a vale of tears, in which he must expect *few days, and full of trouble:* the sorrow he carried in his name might help to put a seriousness upon his spirit. It might also mind him to love and honour his mother, and labour in every thing to be a comfort to her who brought him into the world with so much sorrow.

It is piety in children thus to requite their parents, 1 Tim. v. 4. *Jabez was more honourable than his brethren.* He was eminent in piety; because we find here, that he was a praying man. His

inclination to devotion made him truly honourable; and by prayer he obtained thoſe bleſſings from God, which added much to his honour. The way to be truly great, is to be truly good, and to pray much.

Jabez prayed that *God would bleſs him indeed.* Spiritual bleſſings are the beſt bleſſings; and thoſe are bleſſed indeed who are bleſſed with them. God's bleſſings are real things, and produce real effects.

Jabez prayed that *God would keep him from evil*; the evil of ſin, the evil of trouble, all the evil deſigns of his enemies, that they might not hurt nor grieve him, nor make him a Jabez indeed, a man of ſorrow.

Obſerve, What was the ſucceſs of Jabez's prayer *God granted him that which he requeſted*; proſpered him remarkably, and gave him ſucceſs in his undertakings, in his ſtudies, in his worldly buſineſs, in his conflicts with the Canaanites; and ſo he became *more honourable than his brethren.* God was of old always ready to hear prayer, and *his ear is not yet heavy.*

CHAP. X.

Ver. 8—14. From the triumphs of divine juſtice in the ruin of Saul, we may learn,

1. That the ſin of ſinners will certainly find them out, ſooner or later. Saul died for his tranſgreſſions.

2. That no man's greatneſs can exempt him from the judgments of God.

3. Disobedience is a killing thing.

Saul died for *not keeping the word of the Lord*, by which he was ordered to destroy the Amalekites.

Saul slew himself, and yet it is said, God slew him. What is done by wicked hands, yet is done *by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.* They that abandon themselves to the devil, shall be abandoned to him; so shall their doom be.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 8—17. Let David's enquiring of God once and again upon occasion of the Philistines invading him, direct us in all our ways to acknowledge him, in distress to fly to him, when we are wronged to appeal to him, and when we know not what to do, to ask counsel at his oracles, to put ourselves under his conduct, and to beg of him to shew us a right way.

Let David's success encourage us to resist our spiritual enemies in observance of divine directions, and in dependence on divine strength. Resist the devil and he shall flee, as the Philistines did before David.

Let the sound of the going in the tops of the mulberry trees, direct us to attend God's motions, both in his providence, and in the influences of his Spirit.

When we perceive God go before us, let us gird up our loins, gird on our armour, and follow him.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 16—27. It is very obſervable, and what in Samuel, Chap. vii. 21. is ſaid to be *for thy word's ſake*, is here ſaid to be *for thy ſervant's ſake*. Jeſus Chriſt is both *the word of God*, Rev. xix. 13. and *the ſervant of God*, Iſa. xlii. 1. and it is for his ſake, upon the ſcore of his mediation, that the promiſes are both made, and made good to all believers. It is in him, that they are *Yea and Amen*.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1—3. We have had a more full account of what is here recorded, in 2 Sam. xi. and xii chapters, and cannot but remember by this ſad token, that while Joab was beſieging Rabbah, David fell into that great ſin in the matter of Uriah.

But it is obſervable, that though the reſt of the ſtory be repeated, that is not; but only a hint given of it in thoſe words which lie here in a parentheſis, (*But David tarried at Jeruſalem*) If he had been abroad with his army, he had been out of the way of that temptation; but indulging his eaſe, he fell into uncleanneſs. Now as the relating of that ſin David fell into, is an inſtance of the impartiality and fidelity of the ſacred writers; ſo the avoiding of the repetition of it here, when there was a fair occaſion given to ſpeak of it again, is deſigned to teach

us, that though there may be juſt occaſion to ſpeak of the faults and miſcarriages of others, yet we ſhould not take delight in the repetition of them; that ſhould always be looked upon as an unpleaſing ſubject, which though ſometimes one cannot help falling upon, yet one would not chooſe to dwell upon, nor love to rake in a dunghill. Thoſe perſons or actions we can ſay no good of, we had beſt ſay nothing of.

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1—9. David ſets his people a good example in contributing towards the building of the temple. Thoſe that ſet their affection upon the ſervice of God, will think no pains or coſt too much to beſtow upon it: and then our offerings are pleaſing to God, when they come from love. They that ſet their affections on things above, will ſet their affection on the houſe of God, through which our way to heaven lies. Thoſe who would draw others to that which is good, muſt lead themſelves. Thoſe eſpecially that are advanced above others in place and dignity, ſhould eſpecially contrive how to make their light ſhine before men, the influence of their example is more powerful and more extenſive than that of other people.

David rejoiced to obſerve with what zeal and generoſity his people copied his example in contributing towards the building of the temple; that his ſon

and ſucceſſor would have thoſe about him that were ſo well affected to the houſe of God; and that this work, which his heart was ſo much ſet upon, was likely to go on. Note, It is a great reviving to good men, when they are leaving the world, to ſee thoſe they leave behind zealous for religion, and likely to keep it up. *Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace.*

Ver. 10—22. David acknowledgeth with thankfulneſs the grace of God enabling both himſelf and his people to contribute ſo chearfully towards the building of the temple. Note,

1. It is a great inſtance of the power of God's grace in us, to be able to do the work of God willingly. He works *both to will and to do*; and it is in the day of his power that his people are made willing, Pſalm cx. 3.

2. We muſt give God the glory of all the good that is at any time done by ourſelves or others. Our own good works muſt not be the matter of our pride, nor the good works of others the matter of our flattery; but both the matter of our praiſe; for certainly it is the greateſt honour and pleaſure in the world faithfully to ſerve God.

II CHRONICLES.

CHAPTER V. VER. I—IO.

ALL the other conſecrated veſſels that were brought into the temple were made new and bigger in proportion to the houſe than they had been in the tabernacle; but the ark with the mercy-ſeat and the cherubims were the ſame; for the preſence and grace of God is the ſame in little aſſemblies that it is in large ones, in the poor condition of the church, that it is in its proſperous eſtate. Wherever two or three are gathered in Chriſt's name, there is he as truly preſent with them, as if there were two or three thouſand.

When the holy veſſels and the ark were brought into the temple, this was done with great joy.

Note, 1. The eſtabliſhment of the public worſhip of God, according to his inſtitution, and with the tokens of his preſence, is and ought to be matter of great joy to any people.

2. When Chriſt is formed in a ſoul, the law written in the heart, the ark of the covenant ſettled there, ſo that it becomes the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, there is true ſatisfaction in that ſoul.

3. Whatever we have the comfort of, we muſt, by the ſacrifices of praiſe, give God the glory of,

and not be ſtraightened therein; for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1—11. God teſtified the acceptance of Solomon's prayer, at the dedication of the temple, by cauſing *fire to come down from heaven and conſume the ſacrifice.*

Let us apply this,

1. To the ſufferings of Chriſt. When it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him and put him to grief, in that he ſhewed his good-will to men, having laid on him the iniquity of all. His death was our life, and he was made ſin and a curſe, that we might inherit righteouſneſs and a bleſſing. That ſacrifice was conſumed, that we might eſcape; *Here am I, let theſe go their way.*

2. To the ſanctification of the Spirit who deſcended like fire, burning up our luſts and corruptions, (thoſe beaſts that muſt be ſacrificed, or we are undone;) and kindling in our ſouls a holy fire of pious and devout affections, always to be kept burning on the altar of the heart. The ſureſt evidence of God's acceptance of our prayers, is the deſcent of this holy fire upon us, *Did not our hearts burn within us?* Luke xxiv. 32.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 13—31. It is very obſervable, that no mention is here made of Solomon's departure from God in his latter days, nor the leaſt hint given of it;

1. Becauſe the Holy Ghoſt would teach us not to take delight in repeating the faults and follies of others.

2. Becauſe though he fell, yet he was not utterly caſt down. Therefore his ſin is not again recorded, becauſe it was repented of and pardoned, and ſo became as if it had never been. Scripture ſilence ſometimes ſpeaks. I am willing to believe, that its ſilence here concerning the ſin of Solomon, is an intimation, that none of the ſins he commited, were mentioned againſt him, Ezek. xxxiii. 16. When God pardons ſin, he *caſts it behind his back*, and remembers it no more.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 13—23. When Jeroboam and his ſons reſtrained the prieſts and Levites from ſerving God in Iſrael, they came to Judah and Jeruſalem, leaving *their ſuburbs and poſſeſſions behind them.* Poverty in the way of duty is to be choſen rather than plenty in the way of ſin. Better live upon alms, or die in a priſon with a good conſcience, than roll in wealth and pleaſure with a proſtituted one.

When the prieſts and levites came to Jeruſalem, all the devout pious Iſraelites of every tribe followed them.

Note, 1. That is beſt for us which is beſt for our ſouls; and, in all our choices, advantages for religion muſt take place of all outward conveniences.

2. Where God's faithful prieſts are, his faithful people ſhould be. If Jeroboam caſt off God's miniſters, every true-born Iſraelite will think himſelf obliged to own them, and ſtand by them.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1—12. The rebukes both of the word and rod being joined, king Rehoboam and his princes humbled themſelves before God for their iniquity, penitentially acknowledged the ſin and patiently accepted the puniſhment of it, ſaying, *The Lord is righteous*. Thus it becomes us, when we are under the rebukes of providence, to juſtify God, and judge ourſelves. Even kings and princes muſt either bend or break before God; either be humbled or be ruined. God in mercy prevented the deſtruction Rehoboam and his people were now upon the brink of.

Note, Thoſe that acknowledge God righteous in afflicting them, ſhall find him gracious. They that humble themſelves before him, ſhall find favour with him. If we have humbled hearts under humbling providences, the affliction has done its work, and it ſhall be removed, or the property of it be altered.

But though God did not deliver over Rehoboam and his people to deſtruction, yet he left them to ſmart ſorely by the hand of Shiſhack, both in their liberty and in their wealth; *They ſhall be his ſervants, that they may know my ſervice and the ſervice of the kingdoms of the countries.*

Note, 1. The more God's ſervice is compared with other ſervices, the more eaſy and reaſonable it will appear.

2. Whatever difficulties or hardſhips we may imagine there are in the way of obedience, it is better a thouſand times to go through them, than to expoſe ourſelves to the puniſhments of diſobedience.

Are the laws of temperance thought hard? The effects of intemperance will be much harder. The ſervice of virtue is perfect liberty; the ſervice of luſt is perfect ſlavery.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 9—15. Aſa's prayer is ſhort, but has much in it. 1. He gives to God the glory of his infinite power and ſovereignty. *It is nothing with thee to help* and ſave by many or few, by them that are mighty or by *them that that have no power.* See 1 Sam. xiv. 6. God works in his own ſtrength, not in the ſtrength of inſtruments, Pſalm xxi. 13. nay, it is his glory to *help the weakeſt*, and *perfect ſtrength out of the mouth of babes and ſucklings.* We do not ſay, Lord take our part, for we have a good

army for thee to work by, but take our part, for without thee we have no power.

2. He takes hold of their covenant-relation to God as theirs. *O Lord our God*, and again, *thou art our God* whom we have choſen and cleave to as ours, and who haſt promiſed to be ours.

3. He pleads their dependance upon God, and the eye they had to him in this expedition. He was well prepared for it, yet truſted not to his preparations, but *Lord we reſt on thee, and in thy name we go againſt this multitude*, by warrant from thee, aiming at thy glory, and truſting to thy ſtrength.

4. He intereſts God in their cauſe, *let not man* (mortal man, ſo the word is) *prevail againſt thee.* If he prevail againſt us, it will be ſaid that he prevails againſt thee, becauſe thou art our God, and we reſt on thee, and go forth in thy name, which thou haſt encouraged us to do. The enemy is a mortal man; make it to appear what an unequal match he is for an immortal God.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 7—14. Aſa, though a good man, towards his latter end, degenerated. After all the experience he had had of the care, and power, and goodneſs of God, as exerciſed reſpecting him, he committed a great fault, and manifeſted his diſtruſt of God in making a league with the king of Syria: and he is

here charged by Hanani the ſeer with *relying on the king of Syria*, and not on the *Lord his God*.

Note, The many experiences we have had of the goodneſs of God to us, aggravate our diſtruſt of him. Has he not helped us in ſix troubles? and have we any reaſon to ſuſpect him in the ſeventh? But ſee how deceitful our hearts are! We truſt in God when we have nothing elſe to truſt to; when need drives us to him, but when we have other things to ſtay on, we are apt to ſtay too much on them, and to lean to our own underſtanding as long as that has any thing to offer; but a believing confidence will be in God only, when a ſmiling world courts it moſt.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 10—19. Obſerve, it was not Jehoſhaphat's formidable army of almoſt twelve hundred thouſand men, that ſtruck a terror upon the neighbouring nations, that reſtrained them from attempting any thing againſt Iſrael, or obliged them to pay tribute; but the fear of God which fell upon them when Jehoſhaphat reformed his country, and ſet up a preaching miniſtry in it. The ordinances of God are more the ſtrength and ſafety of a kingdom, than its military force: it is in men of God, more than in men of war.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1—13. Jehoſhaphat in his prayer profeſſeth his entire dependence upon God for deliverance from the imminent danger which now threatened him. Though he had a great army on foot, and well diſciplined, yet (ſaith he) *we have no might againſt this great company*, none without thee, none that we can expect any thing from without thy ſpecial preſence and bleſſing, none to boaſt of, none to truſt to; but *our eyes are upon thee*, we rely upon thee, and from thee is all our expectation. The diſeaſe ſeems deſperate, *we know not what to do*, are quite at a loſs, in a great ſtraight, but this is a ſovereign remedy, *our eyes are upon thee*; an eye of acknowledgment and humble ſubmiſſion, an eye of faith and entire dependence, an eye of deſire and hearty prayer, an eye of hope and patient expectation. *In thee, O God, do we put our truſt; our ſouls wait on thee.*

Ver. 14—19. We have here God's gracious anſwer to Jehoſhaphat's prayer; and it was a ſpeedy anſwer. *While he was yet ſpeaking God heard.* Before the congregation was diſmiſſed that had been convened together upon this ſolemn occaſion of a public faſt, they had aſſurance given them that they ſhould be victorious, for it is never in vain to ſeek God.

Ver. 20—30. See how rich God is in mercy to them that call upon him in truth; and how often he

outdoes the prayers and expectations of his people. Jehoshaphat and his people prayed to be delivered from being spoiled by the enemy; and God not only did that, but enriched them with the spoil of the enemy.

Never was victory celebrated with more solemn and enlarged thanksgivings, than this was which Jehoshaphat obtained over his enemies.

1. They kept a day of praise in the camp before they drew their forces out of the field.

2. Yet they did not think this enough, but came in solemn procession, all in a body, and Jehoshaphat at the head of them, to Jerusalem, that the country as they passed along might join with them in their praises: and that they might give thanks for the mercy where they had by prayer obtained it, *in the house of the Lord.* Praising God must not be the work of a day only; but our prayers when we have received mercy, must be often repeated, as our prayers were when we were in the pursuit of it. Every day we must bless God. As long as we live, and while we have any being we must praise him, spending our time in that work in which we hope to spend our eternity. Public mercies call for public acknowledgements, *in the courts of the Lord's house,* Psalm cxvi. 19.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 15—27. Jehoiada finiſhed his courſe with honour, but that little religion that Joaſh had was all buried in his grave, and after his death both king and kingdom went all to naught. See how much ſometimes one head holds up, and what a great judgment to any prince or people, the death of godly, zealous, uſeful men is. See how neceſſary it is that, as our Saviour ſpeaks, we *have ſalt in ourſelves*, that we act in religion from an inward principle, which will carry us on through all charges. The loſs of a parent, a miniſter, a friend, will not be the loſing of our religion.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 1—15. As long as Uzziah *ſought the Lord*, and minded religion, *God made him to proſper*.

Note, 1. Thoſe only proſper whom *God makes to proſper*; for proſperity is his gift.

2. Religion and piety is a good friend to outward proſperity. Many have found and owned this, that as long as they ſought the Lord, and kept cloſe to their duty, they proſpered; but ſince they forſook God, every thing has gone croſs.

Ver. 16—23. The puniſhment of the ſin of Uzziah *in going into the temple of the Lord to burn*

incenſe, was one that anſwered the ſin, as face doth face in a glaſs.

1. Pride was at the bottom of his trangreſſion, and thus God by making him a leper, humbled him and put diſhonour upon him.

2. He invaded the office of the prieſts in contempt of them, and God ſtruck him with a diſeaſe, which in a particular manner made him ſubject to the inſpection and ſentence of the prieſts; for to them pertained the *judgment of the leproſy*, Deut. xxiv. 8.

3. He thruſt himſelf into the temple of God, whither the prieſts only had admiſſion, and for that was thruſt out of the very courts of the temple, into which the meaneſt of his ſubjects that was ceremonially clean had free acceſs.

4. He confronted the prieſts that faced him and oppoſed his preſumption, and for that the leproſy *roſe in his forehead*, which in Miriam's caſe is compared to her father's *ſpitting in her face*, Numb. xii. 14.

5. He invaded the dignity of the prieſthood which he had no right to, and is for that deprived even of his royal dignity, which he had a right to. They that covet forbidden honours forfeit allowed ones. Adam by catching at the tree of knowledge, which he might not eat of, debarred himſelf from the tree of life which he might have eaten of. Let all that read it ſay, "The Lord is righteous."

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1—9. We muſt not imitate the beſt men, and thoſe we have the greateſt veneration for, any farther than they did well; but, on the contrary, their falls and harms muſt be warnings to us to walk the more circumſpectly, that we ſtumble not at the ſame ſtone that they ſtumbled at.

The more ſtedfaſt we are in religion, the more mighty we are both for the reſiſtance of that which is evil, and the performance of that which is good.

When that wealth and power which wiſe men have done good with, devolves upon fools that will do hurt with it, it is a lamentation, and ſhall be for a lamentation.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 16—27. Ahaz, in his diſtreſs, *treſpaſſed yet more againſt the Lord.* Note, Thoſe are wicked and vile indeed, that are made worſe by their afflictions, inſtead of being made better by them; who *in their diſtreſs trepaſs yet more*, have their corruptions exaſperated by that which ſhould mollify them, and their hearts more fully ſet in them to do evil.

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1—11. Thoſe that turn their backs upon God's ordinances, may truly be ſaid to forſake God himſelf.

When we are under the rebukes of God's providence, it is good for us to enquire whether we have not neglected God's ordinances, and whether that be not the controverſy he has with us.

CHAP. XXX.

Ver. 13—20. Hezekiah's prayer is a ſhort one, but to the purpoſe.

Note, 1. The great thing required in our attendance upon God in ſolemn ordinances is, *that we prepare our hearts to ſeek him*; that we be ſincere and upright in all we do, that the inward man be engaged and employed in it, and we make heart work of it: it is all nothing without this. *Behold thou deſireſt truth in the inward part.*

2. Where this ſincerity and fixedneſs of heart is, yet it is poſſible there may be many defects and infirmities: both the frame of the ſpirit, and the performance of the ſervice, may be ſhort of the *purification of the ſanctuary*. Corruptions not ſo fully conquered, thoughts not ſo cloſely fixed, affections not ſo lively, faith not ſo operative as it ſhould be; here is a defect in ſanctuary purification; there is

nothing perfect under the ſun, nor *a juſt man that doth good and ſinneth not.*

3. Theſe defects need pardoning, healing grace; for omiſſions are ſins in duty, as well as omiſſions of duty. If God ſhould deal with us in ſtrict juſtice according to the beſt of our performances, we were undone.

4. The way to obtain pardon for our deficiences in duty, and all the iniquities of our holy things, is to ſeek it of God by prayer; it is not ſo a pardon of courſe, but that it muſt be obtained by petition, through the blood of Chriſt.

5. In this prayer we muſt take encouragement from the goodneſs of God. The *good Lord pardon*; for when he proclaimed his goodneſs, he inſiſted moſt upon this branch of it, *forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin.*

6. It is the duty of thoſe that have the charge of others, not only to look to themſelves, but to thoſe alſo that are under their charge, to ſee wherein they are wanting, and to pray for them, as Hezekiah here.

Ver. 21—27. *The children of Iſrael kept the feaſt of unleavened bread with great gladneſs.* Note, Holy duties ſhould be performed with holy gladneſs. We ſhould be forward to them and take pleaſure in them, reliſh the ſweetneſs of communion with God, and look upon it as matter of unſpeakable joy and comfort that we are thus favoured, and have ſuch earneſts of everlaſting joy.

CHAP. XXXII.

Ver. 24—33. *Hezekiah humbled himſelf for the pride of his heart.*

Note, 1. Though God may, for wiſe and holy ends, ſuffer his people to fall into ſin, yet he will not ſuffer them to lie ſtill in it: they *ſhall not be utterly caſt down.*

2. Heart ſins are to be repented of, though they go no farther.

3. Self-humiliation is a neceſſary branch of repentance.

4. Pride of heart by which we have lifted up ourſelves, is a ſin for which we ought in a ſpecial manner to humble ourſelves.

5. People ought to mourn for the ſins of their rulers. The inhabitants of Jeruſalem humbled themſelves with Hezekiah; either becauſe they knew they alſo had been guilty of the ſame ſin, or at leaſt feared they might ſhare in the puniſhment. When David in his pride numbered the people, they all ſmarted for it.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Ver. 11—20. Thoſe that truly repent of their ſins will not only return to God themſelves, but will do all they can to reduce thoſe that have by their example been ſeduced, and drawn away from God.

It becomes penitents to take ſhame to themſelves, to give thanks to their reprovers, and warning to others. Penitents may recover their comfort ſooner than their credit.

CHAP. XXXV.

Ver. 1—19. Thoſe that ſincerely deſire to be found in the way of their duty, ſometimes providence raiſeth them up friends to bear them out in it, beyond what they could have expected.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Ver. 11—21. The land of Judea lay deſolate, while the children of Iſrael where captives in Babylon. They many a time ploughed and ſowed their land in the ſeventh year, when it ſhould have reſted, and now it lay unploughed and unſown for ten times ſeven years.

Note, God will be no loſer in his glory at long run by the diſobedience of men. If the tribute be not paid, he will diſtrain and recover it, as he ſpeaks, Hoſ. ii. 9. If they would not let the land reſt, God would make it reſt whether they would or no.

EZRA.

CHAPTER I. VER. I—4.

THE Lord ſtirred up the ſpirit of Cyrus, king of Perſia. Note, The hearts of kings are in the hand of the Lord, and, like the rivulets of water, he turneth them which way ſoever he will. It is ſaid of Cyrus, that he knew not God, nor how to ſerve him, but God knew him, and how to ſerve himſelf by him, Iſa. xlv. 4. God governs the world by his influence on the ſpirits of men, and whatever good is done at any time, it is God that ſtirs up the ſpirit to do it, puts thoughts into the mind, gives to the underſtanding a right judgment, and directs the will which way he pleaſeth. Whatever good offices therefore are at any time done for the church of God, he muſt have the glory of them.

Ver. 5—11. Whatever good we do, it is owing purely to the grace of God, and he raiſeth up our ſpirits to the doing of it; *works in us both to will and to do.* Our ſpirits naturally incline to this earth, and to the things of it: if they move upwards in any good affections or good actions, it is God that raiſeth them.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 8—13. This mixture of ſorrow and joy is a repreſentation of this world; ſome are bathing in rivers of joy, while others are drowned in floods of tears. In heaven all are ſinging and none ſighing; in hell all are weeping and wailing, and none rejoicing; but here on earth we can ſcarce *diſcern the ſhouts of joy from the noiſe of the weeping*. Let us learn to *rejoice with them that do rejoice*, and *weep with them that weep*; and ourſelves to rejoice as though we rejoiced not, and weep as though we wept not.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1—5. We have need to take heed who we go partners with, and on whoſe hand we lean. While we truſt God with a pious confidence, we muſt truſt men with a prudent jealouſy and caution.

CHAP VI.

Ver. 1—12. It is the duty of God's people, to pray for thoſe that are in authority over them, not only for the good and gentle, but alſo for the froward: but they are particularly bound in gratitude to pray for their protectors and benefactors: and it is the wiſdom of princes to deſire their prayers and to engage them.

Let not the greateſt princes deſpiſe the prayers of the meaneſt ſaints: it is deſirable to have them for us, and dreadful to have them againſt us.

Here we learn,

1. That the heart of kings is in the hand of God, and he turns it which way ſoever he pleaſeth; what they are he makes them to be, for he is *king of kings*.

2. That when God's time is come for the accompliſhment of his gracious purpoſes concerning his church, he will raiſe up inſtruments to do it, from whom ſuch good ſervice was not expected. Rev. xii. 16. and thoſe are made uſe of for the defence of religion that have little religion themſelves.

3. That what is intended for the prejudice of the church, has often, by the over-ruling providence of God, been made ſerviceable to it, Phil. i. 12. The enemies of the Jews, in appealing to Darius, hoped to get an order to ſuppreſs them, but inſtead of that got an order to ſupply them.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1—10. Every creature is that to us that God makes it to be, and from him our judgment proceeds: as the events that *ſhall be* we muſt ſee in God's hand, ſo the events that *are* we muſt ſee God's hand in, and acknowledge him with thankfulneſs, when we have reaſon to call it his good hand.

Ver. 27, 28. God can put things into men's hearts, which would not ariſe there of themſelves, and into their heads too, both by his providence and by his grace, in things *pertaining both to life and godlineſs*. If any good appear to be in our own hearts, or in the hearts of others, we muſt own it was God that put it there, and bleſs him for it; for it is he that *worketh in us both to will and to do* that which is good. When princes and magiſtrates act for the ſuppreſſion of vice, and the encouragement of religion, we muſt thank God that put it into their hearts to do ſo, as much as if they had granted us ſome particular favour.

Whatever ſervice we are enabled to do for God and our generation, God muſt have all the glory of it. Strength for it is derived from him, and therefore the praiſe of it muſt be given to him.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 5—15. Note, 1. Sin is a ſhameful thing, as ſoon as ever our firſt parents had eaten forbidden fruit, they were aſhamed of themſelves.

Holy ſhame is as neceſſary an ingredient in true and ingenuous repentance as holy ſorrow.

3. Others' ſins ſhould be our ſhame, and we ſhould bluſh for thoſe that do not bluſh for themſelves.

4. Penitent ſinners never ſee ſo much reaſon to bluſh and be aſhamed, as when they come to *lift up*

their faces before God. A natural ſenſe of our own honour which we have injured, will make us aſhamed when we have done an ill thing to look men in the face; but a gracious concern for God's honour will make us more aſhamed to look him in the face.

The publican when he went to the temple to pray, hung down his head more than ever, as one aſhamed, Luke xviii. 13.

5. An eye to God as our God, will be of great uſe to us in the exerciſe of repentance. Ezra begins, *O my God*, and again in the ſame breath, *my God.*

The conſideration of our covenant relation to God as ours, will help to humble us and break our hearts for ſin, that we ſhould violate both his precepts to us, and our promiſes to him: it will alſo encourage us to hope for pardon upon repentance.

There is not a ſurer or ſadder preſage of ruin to any people, than revolting to ſin, to the ſame ſins again, after great judgments, and great deliverances.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1—5. The *valley of Achor*, i. e. of trouble, is the *door of hope*, Hoſ. ii. 15. for the ſin that truly troubles us ſhall not ruin us.

Note, 1. In melancholy times we muſt ſee and obſerve what makes for us, as well as what makes againſt us.

2. There may be good hopes through grace, even when there is the ſenſe of great guilt before God.

3. Where ſin is ſeen and lamented, and good ſteps are taken towards a reformation, even ſinners ought to be encouraged.

4. Even great ſaints muſt thankfully receive ſeaſonable counſel and comfort from thoſe that are much their inferiors, as Ezra from Shechaniah.

NEHEMIAH.

CHAPTER I. VER. 1—4.

OBSERVE, Nehemiah is not forward to tell us what great preferment he had at court; it is not till the end of the chapter that he tells us he was the king's cup-bearer (a place of great truſt, as well as of honour and profit) when he could not avoid mentioning it becauſe of the following ſtory; but at firſt he only ſaith, *I was in Shuſhan the palace*; whence we may learn to be humble and modeſt, and ſparing to ſpeak of our own advancement. But in the providences of God concerning him, we may obſerve to our comfort,

1. That when God has a work to do, he will never want inſtruments to do it with.

2. That thoſe whom God deſigns to employ in his ſervice, he will find out proper ways both to fit them for it, and to call them to it.

3. That God has his remnant in all places: there was Obadiah in the houſe of Ahab, ſaints in Cæſar's houſhold, and a devout Nehemiah in Shuſhan the palace.

4. That God can make the courts of princes ſometimes nurſeries, and ſometimes ſanctuaries, to the friends and patrons of the church's cauſe.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1—8. When Nehemiah had prayed for the relief of his countrymen, and perhaps in David's words, Pſalm li. 18. *Build thou the walls of Jeruſalem*, he did not ſit ſtill and ſay, let God now do his own work, for I have no more to do; but ſet himſelf to forecaſt what he could do towards it: for our prayer muſt be ſeconded with our ſerious endeavours, elſe we mock God.

Obſerve, Nehemiah calls Jeruſalem the *place of his fathers' ſepulchres*, the place where his anceſtors were buried. It is good for us to think often of our fathers' ſepulchres. We are apt to dwell in our thoughts upon their honours and titles, their houſes and eſtates; but let us alſo think of their ſepulchres, and conſider that they who have gone before us in the world, have alſo gone before us *out* of the world, and their monuments are mementos to us: alſo there is a great reſpect owing to the memory of our fathers, that it be not injured.

Nehemiah aſſigns the ruins of Jeruſalem as the true cauſe of his grief.

Note, All the grievances of the church, but eſpecially its deſolations, are and ought to be matter of grief and ſadneſs to all good people; to all that have a concern for God's honour, that are living members of Chriſt's myſtical body, and are of a

public ſpirit; they favour even Zion's duſt, Pſalm cii. 14.

Nehemiah, before he made his requeſt to king Artaxerxes, prayed to the God of heaven. It was not a ſolemn prayer, he had not opportunity for that; but a ſecret ſudden ejaculation, he lift up his heart to that God, who underſtands the language of the heart, *Lord, give me a mouth and wiſdom; Lord, give me favour in the ſight of this man.*

Note, It is good to be much in pious ejaculations, eſpecially upon particular occaſions.

Wherever we are, we have a way open heavenward. This will hinder no buſineſs, but further it; therefore let no buſineſs hinder this, but give riſe to it. Nehemiah had prayed very ſolemnly with reference to this very occaſion, chap. i. 12. yet when it comes to the puſh he prays again. Ejaculations and ſolemn prayers muſt not juſtle out one another, but each have its place.

Ver. 9—20. Nehemiah and the people ſtrengthened their own and one anothers' hands, for the good work of building the wall of Jeruſalem.

Note, 1. Many a good work would find hands enough to be laid to it, if there were but *one good head* to *lead in it.* They all ſaw the deſolations of Jeruſalem, yet none propoſed the repairs of them. But when Nehemiah propoſed it, they all conſented to it. It is pity a good motion ſhould be loſt, purely for want of one to move it, and to break the ice in it.

2. By *ſtirring up ourſelves and one another* to that which is good, we *ſtrengthen ourſelves and one another* for it; for the great reaſon why we are weak in our duty, is becauſe we are cold to it, indifferent and unreſolved.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1—32. Several things are obſervable in the account here given of the building of the wall about Jeruſalem.

Eliaſhib the high prieſt, with his brethren the prieſts, led the van in this troop of builders. Miniſters ſhould be firſt and foremoſt in every good work, for their office obligeth them to teach and quicken by their example, as well as by their doctrine.

The undertakers were very many, who each took their ſhare, ſome more and ſome leſs in this work, according as their ability was.

Note, What is to be done for the public good, every one ſhould aſſiſt in, and further to the utmoſt of his place and power: united force will conquer that which no one dares venture on. Many hands will make light work.

Of ſome it is ſaid, that they repaired over againſt their houſes, and of one, who, it is likely, was only a lodger, that he repaired *over againſt his chamber*. When a general good work is to be done, each ſhould apply themſelves to that part of it that falls neareſt them, and within their reach.

If every one will ſweep before his own door, the ſtreet will be clean; if every one will mend one, we ſhall be all mended. If he that has but a chamber will repair before that, he doth his part.

Of one of theſe builders it is obſerved, that he was the ſixth ſon of his father. His five elder brethren, it ſeems, laid not their hand to this work, but he did. In doing that which is good, we need not ſtay to ſee our betters go before us: if they decline, it doth not therefore follow that we muſt. Thus the younger brother, if he be the better man, and doth God and his generation better ſervice, is indeed the better gentleman. Thoſe are moſt honourable that are moſt uſeful.

Laſtly, Here is no mention of any particular ſhare that Nehemiah himſelf had in this work. A name-ſake of his is mentioned, ver. 16. But did he do nothing? yes, though he undertook not any particular piece of the wall, yet he did more than any of them, for he had the overſight of them all. The pilot needs not haul at a rope, it is enough for him to ſteer.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 7—15. Thoſe that with an eye of faith ſee the church's God great and terrible, will ſee the church's enemies mean and deſpicable. The reigning fear of God is the beſt antidote againſt the enſnaring fear of man. God's care of our ſafety ſhould

engage and encourage us to go on with vigour in our duty. As ſoon as ever a danger is over, let us *return to our work* and truſt God another time.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 6—13. Note, 1. All that profeſs religion ſhould be very careful that they do nothing to expoſe themſelves to the reproach of them that are without, leſt religion be wounded through their ſides.

2. Nothing expoſes religion more to the reproach of its enemies, than the worldlineſs of its profeſſors.

3. That Nehemiah himſelf had ſet them a better example.

They that rigorouſly inſiſt upon their right themſelves, will with a very ill grace perſuade others to recede from theirs.

Good promiſes are good things, but good performances are all in all.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1—9. We muſt never ſuffer ourſelves to be overcome by the greateſt importunity to do any thing ill or imprudent; but when we are attacked by the ſame temptation, ſtill reſiſt it with the ſame reaſon and reſolution.

In the midſt of Nehemiah's complaints of the malice of his enemies, in endeavouring to frighten him,

and ſo weaken his hands, he lifts up his heart to heaven in this ſhort prayer, *Now, therefore, O God, ſtrengthen my hands.* It is the great ſupport and relief of good people, that in all their ſtraits and difficulties they have a good God to go to; from whom, by faith and prayer, they may fetch in grace to ſilence their fears, and *ſtrengthen their hands*, when their enemies are endeavouring to fill them with fears, and weaken their hands.

Chriſtan fortitude will be ſharpened by oppoſition. Every temptation to draw us from our duty, ſhould quicken us ſo much the more to duty.

Ver. 10—14. Though ſelf-preſervation is a fundamental principle of the law of nature, yet that is not always the beſt and wiſeſt counſel which pretends to go upon that principle.

Holy courage and magnanimity will engage us, whatever it coſt us, never to *decline a good work*, nor ever to *do an ill thing.*

Next to the ſinfulneſs of ſin, we ſhould dread the ſcandalouſneſs of it.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1—4. Of Hananiah it is ſaid, that he was *a faithful man and one that feared God above many.*

Note, 1. Among thoſe who fear God truly, there are ſome who fear him greatly, and excel others in the expreſſions and inſtances of that fear; and they are worthy a double portion of that honour which

is due to them that fear the Lord, Pſalm xv. 4. there were many in Jeruſalem that feared God, but this good man was more eminent for religion and ſerious godlineſs than any.

2. Thoſe that fear God muſt evidence it by their being faithful to all men, and univerſally conſcientious.

3. God's Jeruſalem is then likely to flouriſh when thoſe rule in it, and have charge of it, who excel in virtue, and are eminent both for godlineſs and honeſty.

Ver. 5—73. Nehemiah acknowledges that it was *God that put it into his heart* to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy.

Note, Whatever good motion is in our minds, either prudent or pious, we muſt acknowledge it to come from God. It was he that *put it into our hearts*; for every good gift and every good work is from above; he gives knowledge, he gives grace; all of him, and therefore all muſt be to him. What is done by human prudence, muſt be aſcribed to the direction of divine providence: he that teaches the huſbandman his diſcretion, Iſa. xxviii. 26. teaches the ſtateſman his.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 9—12. The people rejoiced becauſe they had *underſtood the words that were declared to them.*

Note, 1. To have the holy ſcriptures with us,

and helps to underſtand them, is a very great mercy, which we have abundant reaſon to rejoice in. Bibles and miniſters are the joy of God's Iſrael.

2. The better we underſtand the word of God, the more comfort we ſhall find in it: for the darkneſs of trouble ariſeth from the darkneſs of ignorance and miſtake. When the words were firſt declared to them; they wept, but when they underſtood them, they rejoiced, finding at length precious promiſes made to thoſe who repented and reformed, and that therefore there was hope in Iſrael.

Ver. 13—18. The people had ſpent the greateſt part of one day in praying and hearing; and yet were ſo far from being weary of that new moon and ſabbath; that the next day after, though it was no feſtival, the chief of them came together again to hear Ezra expound; which they found more delightful and gainful, than any worldly pleaſure or profit whatſoever.

Note, The more we converſe with the word of God, if we rightly underſtand it, and be affected with it, the more we ſhall covet to converſe with it, and to increaſe in our acquaintance with it. They that underſtand the ſcriptures will ſtill be deſirous to underſtand them better.

Thoſe that would teach others, muſt themſelves receive inſtruction. Prieſts and Levites muſt be taught firſt, and then teach.

Miniſters ſhould preach not only that which is

true and good, but that which is ſeaſonable, directing to the *work of the day in its day.*

Holy joy muſt not indiſpoſe us for godly ſorrow, no more than godly ſorrow for holy joy.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1—18. Many that do not appear forward themſelves for the public good, will yet give a good word to thoſe that do. God and man will bleſs thoſe that are public bleſſings, which ſhould encourage us to be zealous in doing good.

Thankſgiving is neceſſary in prayer; they ſhould go together. Giving thanks for former mercies, is a decent way of begging further mercies.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1—26. We have here the names, and little more than the names, of a great many prieſts and levites, that were eminent in their day among the returned Jews. Why this regiſter ſhould be here inſerted by Nehemiah, doth not appear: perhaps, to keep in remembrance thoſe good men, that poſterity might know to whom they were beholden, under God, for the happy revival and re-eſtabliſhment of their religion among them. Perhaps it is intended to ſtir up their poſterity, who ſucceeded them in the prieſt's office, and inherited their dignities and preferments, to imitate their courage and

fidelity. It is good to know what our godly anceſtors and predeceſſors were, that we may learn thereby what we ſhould be.

The next generation of prieſts, who were chief men, and active in the days of Joiakim, were ſons of the firſt ſet.

Note, We have reaſon to acknowledge God's favour to his church, and care of it, in that as one generation of miniſters paſſeth away, another comes. All theſe who were mentioned, ver. 1, &c. as eminent in their generation, are again mentioned (though with ſome variation in ſeveral of the names) ver. 12, &c. except two, as having ſons that were likewiſe eminent in their generation; are an inſtance that twenty good fathers ſhould leave behind them twenty good ſons (for ſo many here are) that filled up their places.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 15—22. Here is another inſtance of that bleſſed reformation Nehemiah was active in: he revived ſabbath-ſanctification, and maintained the authority of the fourth commandment; and a very good deed this was for the houſe of God, and the offices thereof; for where holy time is overlooked and made nothing of, it is not ſtrange if all holy duties be neglected.

No wonder there was a general decay of religion and corruption of manners among this people,

when they *forſook the ſanctuary, and profaned the ſabbath.*

Ver. 23—31. Nehemiah quotes a precedent to ſhew the pernicious conſequences of the conduct of the people in marrying ſtrange wives. *Did not Solomon king of Iſrael ſin by theſe things?* The falls of great and good men are therefore recorded, that we may take warning by them, to ſhun the temptations by which they were overcome. Solomon was famous for wiſdom, there was no king like him for it; yet when he married ſtrange wives, his wiſdom could not ſecure him from the ſnares; nay, it departed from him, and he did very fooliſhly.

ESTHER.

CHAPTER I. VER. 1—9.

NOTWITHSTANDING the feaſt of Ahaſuerus was a piece of vain glory, and an affectation of pomp to no good purpoſe, yet there were two things relative to this feaſt that were laudable.

1. There was no *forcing of healths*, nor urging them. The drinking was *according to law*, probably ſome law lately made, *none did compel*, no not by a continual propoſing it (as Joſephus explains it); they did not ſend the glaſs about, but every man drank as he pleaſed, ſo that if there were any that drank to exceſs, it was their own fault; but few would when the king's order put an honour upon ſobriety.

This caution of a heathen prince, even when he would ſhew his generoſity, may ſhame many who are called Chriſtians, that think they do not ſufficiently ſhew their good houſe-keeping, nor bid their friends welcome, unleſs they make them drunk; and under pretence of ſending the health round, ſend the ſin round, and death with it.

There is a woe to them that do ſo, let them read it and tremble, Hab. ii. 15, 16. It is robbing men

of their reaſon, their richeſt jewel, and making them fools; the greateſt wrong that can be.

2. There was no mixed dancing, for the gentlemen and ladies were entertained aſunder; not as in Belſhazzar's feaſt, whoſe wives and concubines drank with him, Dan. v. 2. nor as in Herod's whoſe daughter *danced before him.* Vaſhti feaſted the women in her own apartment; not open in the court of the garden, but *in the royal houſe.*

Thus while the king ſhewed the *honour of his majeſty*, ſhe and her ladies ſhewed the honour of their modeſty, which is truly the majeſty of the fair ſex.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1—6. I wonder what the king ſaw in Haman, that was commending or meritorious. It is plain he was not a man of honour or juſtice; of any true courage, or ſteady conduct, but proud and paſſionate, and revengeful, yet promoted and careſſed; and who but he? Princes' darlings are not always worthies.

Haman meditated revenge againſt Mordecai and the Jews. Some that hoped thereby to curry favour with Haman, took notice to him of Mordecai's rudeneſs, waiting to ſee whether he would bend or break. Haman then obſerved it himſelf, and was *full of wrath.* A meek and humble man would have ſlighted the affront, and have ſaid, let him have his humour, what am I the worſe for that? But it

makes Haman's proud ſpirit rage and fret, and boil within him, ſo that he becomes uneaſy to himſelf and all about him.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1—4. Notice is here taken of a law that *none might enter into the king's gate, cloathed with ſackcloth.* Nothing but what was gay and pleaſant muſt appear at court; and every thing that was melancholy muſt be baniſhed thence: all in king's palaces *wear ſoft clothing*, Mat. xi. 8. not ſackcloth. But thus to keep out the badges of ſorrow, unleſs they could withal have kept out the cauſes of ſorrow; to forbid ſackcloth to enter, unleſs they could have forbidden ſickneſs and trouble, and death to enter, was a jeſt.

Ver. 5—17. Mordecai ſuggeſts to Eſther that if ſhe deſerted her friends now through cowardice and unbelief, ſhe would have reaſon to fear, that ſome judgment from heaven would be the ruin of her and her family.

He that by ſinful ſhifts will ſave his life, and cannot find in his heart to truſt God with it in the way of duty, ſhall loſe it in the way of ſin.

Eſther while ſhe deſired that Mordecai would direct the Jews that were in Shuſhan, *to ſanctify a faſt, and call a ſolemn aſſembly*, promiſed that ſhe and her family would ſanctify this faſt in her apartment of the palace, for ſhe might not come to their aſ-

ſemblies. Here is a good example of a miſtreſs praying with her maids, and ſee it is worthy to be imitated. Obſerve alſo, that thoſe who are confined to privacy, may join their prayers with thoſe of the ſolemn aſſemblies of God's people: they that are abſent in body may be preſent in ſpirit. And that thoſe who deſire, and have the prayers of others for them, muſt not think that will excuſe them from praying for themſelves.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1—8. When Eſther went in unto king Ahaſuerus, ſhe feared ſhe ſhould periſh; but is promiſed ſhe ſhall have what ſhe aſks for, though it were *the half of the kingdom.*

Note, God in his providence often prevents the fears, and out-does the hopes of his people, eſpecially when they venture in his cauſe. Let us from this ſtory infer, as our Saviour doth from the parable of the unjuſt judge, an encouragement to *pray always* to our God, *and not faint*, Luke xviii. 6, 7, 8. Hear what this haughty king ſaith, *What is thy petition, and what is thy requeſt? it ſhall be granted thee*; and ſay *ſhall not God hear* and anſwer the prayers of *his own elect that cry day and night to him?* Eſther came to a proud imperious man, we come to the God of love and grace. She was not called, we are: the Spirit ſaith come, and the bride ſaith come. She had a law againſt her, we have a promiſe,

many a promiſe in our favour; *Aſk and it ſhall be given you.* She had no friend to introduce her, or intercede for her; but on the contrary, he that was then the king's favourite, was her enemy: but we have an advocate with the Father, in whom he is well pleaſed. *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace.*

Ver. 9—14. Haman took notice of his own riches and honours, the numerouſneſs of his family, and the high poſts to which he was advanced, that he was the darling of the prince, and the idol of the court, and *yet all this avails him nothing*, ſo long as Mordecai is unhanged. Thoſe that are diſpoſed to be uneaſy, will never want ſomething or other to be uneaſy at; and proud men, though they have much to their mind, if they have not all to their mind, it is as nothing to them. The thouſandth part of what Haman had, would ſerve to make an humble modeſt man as much happineſs as he expects from this world; and yet Haman complains as paſſionately as if he had been ſunk into the loweſt degree of poverty and diſgrace.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1—3. On a certain night, king Ahaſuerus could not ſleep. *His ſleep fled away*, ſo the word is, and perhaps like a ſhadow, the more carefully he purſued it, the farther it went from him. Some times we cannot ſleep becauſe we fain would ſleep.

Even after a banquet of wine he could not ſleep, when providence had a deſign to ſerve in keeping him waking. We read of no bodily indiſpoſition he was under that might break his ſleep; but God *whoſe gift ſleep is*, withheld it from him. Thoſe that are never ſo much reſolved to caſt away care, cannot always do it; they find it in their pillows when they neither expect nor welcome it He that commanded one hundred twenty-ſeven provinces, could not command one hour's ſleep.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 7—10. The courtiers that adored Haman when he was the riſing ſun, ſet themſelves as much againſt him now he is a falling ſtar, and are even glad of an occaſion to run him down; ſo little ſure can proud men be of the intereſt they think they have.

One of them that had been lately ſent to Haman's houſe to fetch him to the banquet, informed the king of the gallows which Haman had prepared for Mordecai. Now Mordecai is the favorite, the chamberlain applauds him, and Haman being in diſgrace, every thing is taken notice of that might make againſt him with the king, and fill up the meaſure of his iniquity.

Haman, by the king's order is hanged upon the gallows which he had cauſed to be erected to hang Mordecai upon.

See here, 1. Pride brought down. He that expected every one to do him reverence is now made an ignominious ſpectacle to the world; and himſelf ſacrificed to juſtice, who diſdained that leſs than a whole nation ſhould be ſacrificed to his revenge. God reſiſts the proud, and thoſe whom he reſiſts will find him irreſiſtible.

2. Perſecution puniſhed. Haman was upon many accounts a wicked man, but his enmity to God's church was his moſt provoking crime; and for that the God to whom vengeance belongs here reckons with him: and though his plot was defeated, gives him *according to the wickedneſs of his endeavours*, Pſalm xxviii. 4.

3. Miſchief returned upon the perſon himſelf that contrived it; the *wicked ſnared in the work of his own hands*, Pſalm vii. 15, 16.—ix. 15, 16. Haman juſtly hanged on the ſame gallows, which he had unjuſtly prepared for Mordecai.

If he had not ſet up that gallows, perhaps the king would not have thought of ordering him to be hanged; but if he rear a gallows for *the man whom the king delights to honour*, the humour is very natural, that he ſhould be ordered to try it himſelf.

The enemies of God's church have often been thus taken in their own craftineſs. In the morning Haman was deſigning himſelf for the robes, and Mordecai for the gallows; but the tables are turned,

Mordecai has the crown, Haman the croſs. The Lord is known by ſuch judgments which he executeth, See Prov. xi. 8. xxi. 18.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 20—31. The hiſtory of the tranſactions here recorded was written by Mordecai, and copies of it diſperſed among all the Jews in all the provinces of the empire, *both nigh and far*. And if this book of Eſther, be the ſame that he wrote, as many think it is, I cannot but obſerve what a difference there is between Mordecai's ſtyle and Nehemiah's. Nehemiah at every turn takes notice of the divine providence and *the good hand of his God* upon him, which is very proper to ſtir up devout affections in the minds of his readers; but Mordecai never ſo much as mentions the name of God in the whole ſtory. Nehemiah wrote his book at Jeruſalem, where religion was in faſhion, and an air of it appeared in men's common converſation; Mordecai wrote his at Shuſhan the palace, where policy reigned more than piety, and he wrote according to the genius of the place. Even thoſe that have the root of the matter in them, are apt to loſe the ſavour of religion, and let their leaf wither, when they converſe wholly with thoſe that have little religion. Commend me to Nehemiah's way of writing; that I would imitate; and yet learn from Mordecai's, that men may be truly de-

vout, though they do not abound in the expreſſions of devotion; and therefore we muſt not judge or deſpiſe our brethren.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1—3. We are here told how great and good Mordecai was.

1. He was great; and it doth one good to ſee virtue and piety thus in honour. He was great with the king; next to him as one he moſt delighted and confided in.

He was *great among the Jews*; not only great above them, more honourable than any of them, but great with them, dear to them, familiar with them, and much reſpected by them.

2. He was good, very good, for he did good; that made him truly great, and then his greatneſs gave him an opportunity of doing ſo much the more good. He not only did good, but he did it in a humble condeſcending way, was eaſy of acceſs, courteous and affable in his carriage, and ſpoke peace to all that made application to him. Doing good works is the beſt and chief thing expected from thoſe that have wealth and power; but giving good words is alſo commendable, and makes the good deed the more acceptable.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

THE Editor of the foregoing Extracts, begs leave reſpectfully to inform the Public, that he has made ſuch further progreſs in the work, that if this firſt volume meets with their approbation, a ſecond, of about the ſame ſize and price, extracted from the remainder of the Old Teſtament, will be ready to put to the preſs, as ſoon as that approbation ſhall be aſcertained.

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